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The women's learning institute : a case study in alternative feminist education.

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THE WOMEN'S LEARNING INSTITUTE:
A CASE STUDY IN ALTERNATIVE FEMINIST EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

By

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Education

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Sherrill Hooker who was unable to complete her own research on the Maiden Rock program due to a tragic, fatal accident. I sincerely hope that some of Sherrill's own findings and emerging conclusions will find a reflection in the following pages. Both Sherrill's work and my own were inspired by strong personal and political as well as professional concerns and commitments. We both hoped that our research would be useful to those women involved in the ongoing process of creating new feminist values and cultural institutions.

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ABSTRACT

The Women's Learning Institute: A Case Study of
Alternative Feminist Education

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A major outgrowth of the women's liberation movement has been the proliferation of alternative women's institutions, "self-help" projects, services and cultural forums created to challenge the sexist values and practices of dominant institutional structures. One direction of such efforts has been the creation of independent, alternative feminist educational programs designed and controlled by and for women. The purpose of the study is to develop a critical understanding of alternative feminist education and is organized around three central questions:

1. How does alternative feminist education differ from traditional male-dominated education?

2. How does its form and content reflect feminist analyses of women's oppression?, and

3. To what extent does it contribute to an effective strategy for challenging women's subordinate position within the dominant educational system and in the larger society?

The analysis builds from two levels. The first develops from a review of the literature on the feminist critique of the male-dominated educational system (particularly higher education). The review is organized around four major areas: (a) the ideology of women's education, (b) the male-centered curriculum and the structure of the academic disciplines, (c) the social relations of the classroom, and (d) the social structure of educational institutions. The review provides a context for understanding the impulse behind alternative feminist educational experiments and offers a framework for assessing their distinctiveness from "mainstream" institutions.

The second level of analysis is based on a case study of one alternative feminist educational program--the Maiden Rock Women's Learning Institute--a non-credit, non-degree, community-based project in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Using the qualitative research methods of participant observation and unstructured interviewing, the case study elaborates the meaning of alternative feminist education to those directly involved with its development at the Women's Learning Institute.

The case study findings are organized around three major areas of analysis. The first examines the basic beliefs and assumptions which shape the broad contours of the program in terms of the coordinators' commitment to working "outside the patriarchy." This concept is understood with regard to the program's organizational autonomy, self-definition as "women-identified" women, and design of educational experiences to create a temporary community of women.

The second area of analysis develops understandings of the alternative feminist curriculum and pedagogy through elaboration of the meaning of "feminist process," i.e., the "how" of learning. Four central themes which emerge are: (a) women telling their stories, (b) learning from "the inside-out," (c) closer to a support group environment, and (d) non-hierarchical learning.

Thirdly, the analysis considers the alternative organizational structure of Maiden Rock and identifies three internal dynamic tensions. These center around the development of informal hierarchy, the division of labor, and the balance between task and process activities.

The final assessment of Maiden Rock's potential as part of a strategy for change raises questions about several key dimensions of the program. These include the implications of the primary curricular focus on "process" and learning from "the personal," the potential as well as limitations of the experience of a community of women, the program's broader reach in terms of audience and political impact, and the internal tensions which emerge from the alternative organizational structure. The study concludes that by itself, Maiden Rock is a small project reaching a selected and limited group of women. As part of a larger movement, however, the program represents a dynamic element in the process of women creating new organizational structures and cultural forms based on female-defined priorities and understandings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

One of the major outgrowths of the women's liberation movement has been the proliferation of alternative women's institutions, enterprises, "self-help" projects, services and cultural forums created to challenge the sexist values and practices of dominant institutional structures. As Rennie and Grimstad (1975) have suggested, these projects reflect an attempt by women to take greater control over their lives, reversing the historic "exclusion of female experience as an element shaping culture" (Introduction).

One direction such efforts have taken has been the creation of independent, alternative feminist educational programs designed and controlled by and for women. These programs represent one of the strategies feminists have chosen to challenge the sexist bias of the male-dominated educational system which has historically:

1. Treated women students less seriously than men;
2. Channeled women into restricted and stereotyped areas of study considered subordinate and complimentary to men's;
3. Legitimized academic disciplines which have systematically ignored or distorted the study of women's lives; and

4. Perpetuated patriarchal[1] ideology reinforcing women's status as the "second sex" (Frazier & Sadker, 1973; Howe, 1974; Stacey, Bereaudu & Daniels, 1974).

The first alternative feminist educational programs--called variously "women's schools" or "women's liberation schools"--emerged in the early 1970's from grass roots feminist organizing efforts. Some have been independent or affiliated with community-based women's centers, e.g., the Women's Survival School in New York and the Feminist Free-You in San Diego. Others have been affiliated with organizations explicitly committed to feminist political analysis and organizing,[2] e.g., the Chicago Women's Liberation School and the Cambridge Women's School. Still others have been coordinated through university women's centers, e.g., Project Self at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (Rennie & Grimstad, 1973, pp. 123-129). Most of these programs have offered courses on a non-credit, non-degree basis charging minimal fees and open to all women.

Since the early seventies, other program models have developed. For example, in 1975, Sagaris, Inc. was founded as the first national institute for the study of feminist political theory, history and philosophy. Other programs which began as independent or experimental projects later became accredited and/or formally institutionalized through "parent" institutions of higher education, e.g., the National Congress for Neighborhood Women College at Brooklyn College in New York and the Feminist Studio Workshop in Los Angeles (an arts program). These programs have had restricted admission and have charged higher

fees, more comparable to those of formal institutions. While programs have varied in terms of particular educational and political orientations and affiliations, all have shared a fundamental belief in the importance of women taking control over their own education, developing new content and new approaches to teaching and learning.

Related conceptually and historically to the "freedom schools" of the Civil Rights Movement (Howe, 1965) and the "free universities" of the student and counter-culture movements (Lichtman, 1973; Magid & King, 1974), women's schools have shared with these movements certain fundamental beliefs about education. All have criticized the traditional authority of teachers, competitive grading and the "sanctity" of formal credentials. Each has believed that personal growth and learning should be placed within a context of creating social and political change; that self-determination is an important dimension of a relevant and liberating education. Part of what has distinguished the alternative feminist educational programs from the others, however, has been: (a) the desire to create independent women's programs beyond the influence of "higher" male authority, (b) the primary commitment to the study of women's lives and the roots of their oppression, (c) the emphasis on learning basic survival and intellectual skills away from which women have been traditionally channeled, and (d) the use of such programs to introduce new women to the ideas of the feminist movement and to develop political analysis and strategy from within (Rennie & Grimstad, 1973, 1975).

Similar to other alternative institutions, many of the women's schools have come and gone, yet there has been no systematic study of their development. While the history of individual projects has often been short-lived, alternative feminist educational programs are part of a much larger phenomenon of women trying to change the dominant values and consciousness shaped by a male culture.

The case has been made for the importance of studying alternative institutions as a way to enlarge our sense of the possible and to assist those engaged in the process of creating change (Kanter & Zurcher, 1973; Rothschild-Witt, 1976). The critical role of the many local, grass roots feminist projects in the growth of the women's liberation movement has been identified (Carden, 1973; Freeman, J., 1973, 1975; Rennie & Grimstad, 1973, 1975). A critical analysis of alternative feminist education has the potential to provide insights to those interested in radical educational reform, alternative institutions and the women's liberation movement. Given the fluctuations in the status of such programs, it is important that they be studied while they are still in operation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop a critical understanding of alternative feminist education. More specifically, the study asks about alternative feminist education: (a) how it differs from traditional, male-dominated education, (b) how its form and content reflect

feminist analyses of women's oppression, and (c) to what extent it contributes to an effective strategy for challenging women's subordinate position within the dominant educational system and in the larger society.

The analysis builds from two levels. The first develops from a critical review of the literature on the feminist critique of the male-dominated educational system. The second develops from a case study of one alternative feminist educational program, the Women's Learning Institute of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The purpose of the review is twofold. First an understanding of the feminist critique of the male bias within the dominant educational system, makes clearer the impulse behind feminist efforts to create new models of education for women outside the "mainstream". Second, the critique provides a framework for later assessing the extent to which the Women's Learning Institute actually offers a liberating alternative. While feminists have identified dimensions of sexist bias at each level of the educational system, the present review emphasizes the critique of higher education and the academic disciplines, since the phenomenon of women's schools has developed at the post-secondary level. The review is divided into four major sections each reflecting women's subordinate status within the educational system: (a) the ideology of women's education, (b) the male-centered curriculum and the structure of the academic disciplines, (c) the social relations of the classroom, and (d) the social structure of educational institutions.

The case study of the Women's Learning Institute provides the basis for developing a "naturalistic understanding" of alternative feminist education through what Stake (1977) has referred to as the "full and thorough knowledge of the particular" (p. 5). That is, rather than seeking law-like generalizations which apply universally to alternative feminist education, the study develops perceptions and understandings of alternative feminist education as it has developed within the context of a particular program. Through the use of the qualitative methods of participant observation and unstructured interviewing, the study elaborates the meaning of alternative feminist education to those directly engaged in its practice. More specifically, the case study of the Women's Learning Institute is organized around the following three areas of analysis:

1. The basic beliefs and assumptions about the nature of women's oppression which shape the broad contours of the educational program;

2. The nature of the curriculum and feminist pedagogy; and

3. The nature of the alternative organizational structure.

The Women's Learning Institute

The process of selecting the Women's Learning Institute--also referred to as "Maiden Rock"[3]--as the site for the case study is discussed in Chapter III, and the full analysis of the program is presented in Chapter IV. What follows, however, is a brief description of the basic thrust and organization of the program by way of background.

Maiden Rock is a non-degree, non-accredited, independent alternative feminist educational program founded in Minneapolis in the fall of 1975 by a small group of five women. Program publicity describes Maiden Rock as,

> An alternative learning center where we wanted education to be women-identified and relevant to the issues and situations of women's lives. . . . Our major goal is to provide a feminist alternative to the present educational structures which, if they deal with women's issues at all, do so within male-dominated institutions. We believe that feminist education has not just a different content from other approaches to education, but has a different form and style. Therefore, our courses are planned by women, implemented by women and attended by women. Our experience has been that feminist learning is non-hierarchical, and that we as women have much to learn from each other about our culture and our history.

The educational programs at Maiden Rock cover a wide range of subject matter all, however, related to different dimensions of women's experience. The courses--most commonly structured in condensed all-day or weekend workshop formats--are offered throughout the year in the immediate Twin Cities area. Lacking permanent class space, these workshops are held in a variety of locations, e.g., local churches and colleges, private homes and space of other feminist organization. During the summer, overnight weekend and more extended programs are also scheduled at a farm about one hour from the city. In addition to the core workshop programs, Maiden Rock has also sponsored evening speakers' series during the winter/spring seasons and other "special events," e.g., community spiritual celebrations and recreational days at the farm.

Maiden Rock advertises its program publicly through brochures and posters disseminated through a variety of channels. The program relies heavily on the informal network of feminist publications, women's organizations, services and enterprises, but also uses standard media sources. Publicity for the summer farm programs has been done on a national and a Midwest regional basis, but the fall/winter/spring offerings are advertised in the immediate Twin Cities area only.

Since the founding of Maiden Rock, overall responsibility for program planning and coordination has been assumed by the volunteer Collective with the exception that during the second year 1976-77, a new group of women was recruited to form a Program Planning Group (PPG) which assumed primary responsibility for curriculum development. By the fall of 1977, however, the two groups had merged into a single collective once again. The Collective is run on a "participatory" model in which each member shares in overall responsibility and decision-making for the program.

While the Collective and PPG have run on volunteer time, Maiden Rock pays women to assume responsibility for leading specific educational programs, e.g., workshop facilitators, speakers. These women are paid primarily from fees charged to program participants. Facilitators are drawn both from within the organization and from the larger community, and their responsibilities are limited to the specific courses they teach. In addition to the facilitators, at different points, Maiden Rock has paid women to assume basic clerical responsibilities (a student intern position), and to assume responsibility as "farm manager/cooks" for the duration of the summer farm programs.

Significance of the Study

Through the critical review of the literature and the case study, the present research contributes to the development of theory of feminist education and adds to the growing body of "feminist research." As Erlich (1976) has argued, the most important kind of feminist research is that which "focuses upon the structures, strategies and goals of the women's movement itself" (p. 11) which can ultimately lead to action. The results of study on the actual efforts of feminists to create new educational forms for women can aid those directly involved in creating social change, helping them to assess successful strategies and to identify mistakes which should not be repeated.

The research also provides important data on a relatively unstudied phenomenon. Altogether, there has been limited research on the field of feminist education. However, what does exists tends to focus on feminist educational reform within dominant institutions, e.g., research on "women's studies" (Astin & Parelman, 1973; Howe, 1977; Howe & Ahlum, 1973). Little attention has been given to those programs which have been created outside mainstream institutions. As Rich (1975) has noted, however, groundbreaking work in feminist thinking and education is less likely to come from within the halls of academe but rather from the multitude of independent, women-controlled institutions and projects which have the full freedom to experiment with form, content and structure.

Given the fluctuating status of many of the women's schools, the research also plays an important role in documenting and analyzing a particular historical phenomenon. Such documentation will make it easier for future researchers to reconstruct the history of the "second wave" of feminism.

Finally, focusing research on the efforts of women to create new cultural forms and modes of consciousness fulfills the important function of research in women's studies identified by Gordon (1975), i.e., that of demonstrating that research centered on women's lives and experiences can "produce new social understanding" leading to a fuller comprehension of the general culture (p. 563).

Delimitations

The present study of alternative feminist education is intentionally designed as exploratory research. In the tradition of case studies and qualitative participant observation, the study is oriented more towards discovery and description of phenomena rather than systematic testing of hypotheses (McCall & Simmons, 1969).

By definition, the case study focuses on the thorough investigation of the particular of the idiosyncratic. What is true of the Women's Learning Institute may not be representative of all alternative feminist education programs. Given the decentralized development of the women's movement and the different tendencies within it (Bunch, 1976; Freeman, 1975; Jaggar, 1977), it is, in fact, likely that

differences would be found among individual programs. (At the same time, the review of the feminist critique of the male-dominated educational system suggests similarities which would be found across individual alternative educational projects.)

What the study claims to do is to uncover themes and patterns which emerge from an holistic and subjective understanding of the meanings attached to the events and interactions constituting the "daily life" of one alternative feminist educational program. This analysis lays a foundation for the kind of "naturalistic generalization" described by Stake (1977) which leads more to expectation than prediction, and which can be most effectively applied to the understanding of similar cases. Such study also provides a basis for suggesting future lines of inquiry.

Defining the Terms

For the purpose of the present study, the term alternative feminist education will be used interchangeably with women's schools to describe the wide variety of non-degree, non-graded educational programs created by feminists to meet the needs and concerns of women. These are programs designed by and for women, committed to challenging women's oppression and to furthering the goals of the women's liberation movement. They are distinguished from more formally constituted university "women's studies" ("female" or "feminist" studies) programs which have the authority to offer official credit and/or degrees, and which rely

primarily on faculty members as instructors. While alternative programs may make arrangements with degree granting institutions to award college credit for courses, they themselves do not have the authority to grant such credit independently. Also, these programs reject professional credentials as the primary basis for selection of instructors.

The terms traditional or male-dominated educational system refer to the formal educational system, particularly, though not exclusively institutions of higher education which have been ultimately shaped by male-defined values, standards and structures (even when they are run by and/or for women).

The term feminist refers to those women who are self-defined as feminists, who believe that women's unequal status relative to men's must be changed and who are committed to working towards that end. The term lesbian-feminist refers to women who define themselves as both lesbians and feminists.

Organization

The research is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the research and includes a statement of the problem, the purpose, significance and delimitations of the study, a brief description of the Women's Learning Institute, and a definition of terms. Chapter II presents a review of the literature on the feminist critique of the male-dominated educational system. Chapter III discusses issues of methodology and includes an overview of the case study and participant

observation methodology as well as the specific design and procedures used in the study of the Women's Learning Institute. Chapter IV presents the complete analysis of data from the case study, and is divided into three major sections. Section 1 discusses the program's political ideology; Section 2, the "what" and "how" of learning; and Section 3, the alternative organizational structure. Chapter V presents the summary and conclusions of the research.

Footnotes

[1]In the narrow sense, patriarchy refers to a historically specific social and political formation characterized by a family structure organized around the power of the father (or the eldest male). Contemporary feminists have used the term patriarchy more generally to describe the pervasive and universal system of male domination over women reinforced through all the major institutions of society as well as through the dominant ideology. In the present study, references to patriarchy (or patriarchal ideology) are used in the latter sense. The term is more fully explicated in Chapter IV, Section 1 with specific reference to the case study of the Women's Learning Institute.

[2]Specifically, I am referring to the various "women's unions" which sprang up in major cities across the country in the early seventies. Emerging from the socialist-feminist tendency within the women's movement (that which analyzes women's oppression in terms of the development of both capitalism and patriarchy), these organizations were structured around political work groups and study groups aimed at developing the women's movement. At one point or another, many of the unions had "women's schools" affiliated with them.

[3]By coincidence, the farm where the program has held summer workshops is situated near the small town of Maiden Rock, Wisconsin. The Collective "appropriated" the town's name for the program for the obvious female connection. In conversation, the program is more commonly referred to as Maiden Rock than as the Women's Learning Institute.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The creation of alternative feminist educational programs has followed from feminist analyses of women's subordinate position within the society, specifically within the male-dominated educational system. The purpose of the review of the literature is to position the phenomenon of these alternative programs within the context of the feminist critique of women's experience in the educational system. Since alternative women's schools have emerged primarily at the post-secondary level, the review will focus on literature pertaining to higher education. The review is divided into the following four sections corresponding to several broad areas of the feminist analysis of women's secondary status within the male-dominated educational system. These are: (a) the changing ideology of women's education, (b) the male-centered curriculum and the structure of the academic disciplines, (c) the social relations of the classroom, and (d) the social structure of educational institutions.

It is important to note that the review does not seek to provide a neutral or "balanced" picture. Women have certainly benefitted in many ways from their entry into the formal educational system. However, the purpose of the review is to highlight feminist analyses of how women's interests have <u>not</u> been served, in order to understand better why some have chosen to work outside mainstream institutions. Furthermore, the focus on areas of criticism lays the groundwork for

a fuller understanding of the efforts of particular programs to create new content and new forms of learning.

The Changing Ideology of Women's Education

In spite of liberal rhetoric regarding expanding opportunities for women's education, the history and current status of women in higher education reflects their persistent treatment as "the second sex" (Conway, 1974; Graham, 1978; Harris, 1974; Howe, 1974; Roby, 1972). As Howe and Ahlum (1973) have pointed out, while women's presence has been increasingly accommodated in higher education, entry alone has not been sufficient to challenge women's inferior social, political and economic status in the larger society. A review of the changing ideology of women's education, as well as some of the critical factors determining her entry into higher education, sheds some light on why expanded educational opportunities themselves have not led to equality with men. Three central themes which stand out in such a review are developed in the following section. One is that overall, women's education has been limited by prevailing assumptions regarding "women's place" in a male-dominated society. A second is that expansion of educational opportunities for women have resulted less from a primary interest in women's independent intellectual or vocational development and more from (a) the changing needs of an expanding economy for women workers with particular skills and (b) shifting institutional needs for new students and increased finances in periods of declining male enrollments (Graham, 1978; Roby, 1972). Finally, when admitted into higher

education, women have generally been regarded as men's inferior, segregated into separate institutions, classes or colleges and channeled into pursuits complementary to rather than conflicting with the studies and careers of men (Conway, 1974; Roby, 1972). What follows is an historical overview of the development of these themes from the Colonial period to the present.

The Colonial period through the nineteenth century.

In the Colonial period, most girls were educated at home by their mothers, learning the daily tasks of women's work, e.g., spinning, weaving, making shoes, candles and quilts, caring for children, and tending crops (Roby, 1972). Among the Puritans, women were even encouraged to be literate; but this literacy was to be directed towards the study of scriptures under the guidance of men. Women's pursuit of an independent education which in any way challenged the authority of the male elders was expressly discouraged; and in those cases, such as that of Anne Hutchinson, in which women went "too far" in threatening the power of the "fathers", they were directly punished (Conway, 1974).

Influenced by enlightenment ideas from Europe and England in the eighteenth century, debate developed around the question of women's rationality and the importance of educating her mind. Certain thinkers, notably the influential educator Benjamin Rush, were willing to reject the Christian view of women as naturally more impulsive and less able to reason than men, but accepted women's primary vocation in terms of their roles as wives and mothers. Even the outspoken British feminist Mary

Wollstonecraft (1976) argued that women's reasoning powers should be developed to better prepare them as mothers and enlightened companions of men. Benjamin Franklin believed that women's intellect could best be developed through contact with the more disciplined male intellect during courtship rather than in formal institutions (Conway, 1974).

In fact, in the 1700's, little formal education was available for women. What did exist was restricted to the daughters of the wealthy in "female seminaries" designed to school them in such ladylike pursuits as "embroidery, painting, French, singing and playing the harpsicord" (Flexner, 1972, p. 23). The small numbers of colleges established prior to the Revolutionary War, e.g., Harvard, William and Mary, Princeton and Yale, were clearly off limits to young women, restricted to the sons of wealthy property holders. The more ornamental education of women could surely not prepare them to pursue the "learned" professions such as law, teaching and the ministry, which the male college graduates generally followed (Roby, 1972).

Between 1800 and 1840, attitudes towards women's education were influenced by the politics of the "new republic," the developing ideology of women's place in the home, and the new demands of the expanding industrial economy. Along with the rhetoric of Jacksonian democracy and the extension of the vote to the "working man," was a national concern for the development of an "educated", "virtuous" and "disciplined" citizenry that would exercise its new republican rights judiciously (Wishy, 1968). Faced with the large influx of primarily Irish immigrants, the growing chaos and poverty of crowded cities and new industrial towns,

the upper classes were eager to avoid the "disruptive" social forces that were rocking the monarchies of Europe. At the same time, the new industrialists sought a more skilled and disciplined work force.

While women were still not granted the "natural right" of the vote, they were increasingly offered an alternative sphere for wielding influence in the New Republic, i.e., the home. If women could not directly participate in the new government, they could play the important role of preparing their sons to assume this new responsibility. As Dr. Benjamin Rush, prominent writer on female education, concluded in 1787,

> the equal share that every citizen has in the liberty, and the equal share he may have in the government of our country make it necessary that our ladies should be qualified to a certain degree by a peculiar and suitable education, to concur in instructing their sons in the principles of liberty and government. (Flexner, 1972, p. 17)

As the home came to be viewed as the foundation of the new republic, the center for the moral education and discipline of the young, women's destiny was increasingly defined as guardian and holder of the domestic sceptre. Women's greater piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness cultivated by the emerging "cult of true womanhood" naturally suited her to such tasks (Welter, 1966). Furthermore, women's more "gentle" and more "affectionate" natures were seen to be the perfect influence under which young children could develop according to the new advocates of child nurture. The ideological elevation of woman's role as mother was of course happening at the same time that women's (and children's) traditional productive roles in the family were diminishing with the rise of industrial capitalism (Flashman, 1975).

At the same time that the tasks of motherhood were being eulogized as a special form of female patriotic and religious duty, however, young single women were being drawn into the labor force both as textile workers in the new factories and increasingly as teachers. The historical evidence suggests that women were recruited into teaching at that time primarily as a cheaper source of labor to staff the expanding public school system (Katz, 1968, p. 58). Educational reformers and proponents of female education of the period, however, rationalized the entry of women into teaching based on the same moral qualities and gentle natures which suited them for the noble task of motherhood. As educational reformer Horace Mann (1835) spelled out,

> The teacher's work is heart-work, yea, in the very core of the heart. . . . Hence, nature's commands are most peremptory that affection as well as intelligence, the wisest wisdom and the gentlest gentleness shall preside over the rearing of children. . . . Education, then, I say emphatically, is women's work--the domain of her empire, the sceptre of her power, the crown of her glory. (p. 82)

While the new importance attached to women's role as mothers (and teachers) clearly reinforced separate and complementary spheres for women and men, it also provided a new rationale for more complete and expanded schooling for women. By the early 1820's, numerous two-year female seminaries were established with the goals of preparing young women first for their future duties and responsibilities as wives and mothers--including training in the new "domestic science"--and second for work as teachers. Pioneers in women's education such as Emma Willard and Catherine Beecher played a critical role in expanding educational opportunities for girls and broadening the curriculum to include

such subjects as physiology, mathematics, geography, and history (Flexner, 1972).

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century as compulsory school laws were passed and as the number of schools and demand for teachers multiplied, new four-year institutions--normal schools--were established by the state in order to provide teachers with more rigorous training (Katz, 1968; Roby, 1972). More advanced than the seminaries, the normal schools still, however, fell beneath the standards of the private male colleges.

The first four-year college to remotely offer women an education comparable to that of men's was Oberlin in 1837. As quoted in Flexner (1972), one of the founders' objectives was "'the elevation of the female character bringing within the reach of the misjudged and neglected sex all the instructive privileges which hitherto have unreasonably distinguished the leading sex from theirs'" (p. 30). In spite of noble rhetoric, however, female students were regularly placed in a position of serving the mental and emotional needs of male students and functioning as a domestic work force on the campus (Conway, 1974; Flexner, 1972). According to the outspoken feminist Lucy Stone, a student at Oberlin in the 1840's, the college was primarily concerned with preparing women to fulfill their roles as mothers and enlightened companions to men.

> Oberlin's attitude was that women's high calling was to be the mothers of the race, and that they should stay within that special sphere in order that future generations should not suffer from the want of devoted and undistracted mother care. If women became lawyers, ministers, physicians, lecturers, politicians, or any sort of "public character," the home would suffer from neglect. . . . Washing the men's clothes, caring for their rooms, serving them at tables, listening to their orations, but themselves remaining

> respectfully silent in public assemblages, the Oberline "co-eds" were being prepared for intelligent motherhood and a properly subservient wifehood. (Flexner, 1959, p. 30)

Conway (1974) has commented that there was little sustained or serious debate during the period of the Oberlin experiment about what intellectual training might provide women themselves apart from their roles as wives and mothers.

Women trickled into a handful of colleges after their historic admission to Oberlin for the next 30 years; but it was not until the Civil War and immediately afterwards that they were admitted in significant numbers (Roby, 1972). For example, while coeducation was debated at the University of Wisconsin in the fifties, it was not until 1860 that women were admitted to the normal school. By 1863, there were actually more women than men (Roby, 1972, p. 414). The change was not primarily explained by a sudden shift in thinking about the value of education for women, however. Faced with severe shortages of male students and financial pressures due to the war, many colleges opened their doors to women as alternative fee paying students. Particularly in the midwest and the west, institutions were pressured to admit women in order to meet the increasing demand for public school teachers since the expense of separate institutions would be far greater. As Roby (1972) stated, "Economy was the reason most often cited for coeducation's sudden success--according to Woody, the primary historian of women's higher education" (p. 414). In other cases, women secured admission to male institutions, e.g., at Cornell, the University of Michigan and the University of Rochester after financial donations were made to the colleges for the explicit purpose of expanding female educational opportunities. By

1870, women comprised 21% of all undergraduate students, although only 800 of the 3,000 bachelors degrees awarded women that year were granted by coeducational schools. The rest were received in separate women's colleges (Roby, 1972, p. 414).

One of the most significant developments in women's education following the Civil War was the establishment of the elite women's colleges including Vassar (1865), Smith and Wellesley (1875), Radcliffe (Harvard Annex) (1879), and Bryn Mawr (1885). During the sixties and seventies, two opposing views of women's education were debated within the female institutions as well as in the coeducational ones. On one side, it was argued that women's nature and ultimate role were different from those of men, and that, therefore, their education should be distinct. For example, at Wellesley, while the curriculum came close to that of the male colleges, it also included one hour of domestic work a day as well as instruction in religion and health as important preparation for women's future family roles. On the other side, influenced by the growing feminist movement and most likely by the desire of faculty to avoid the mark of female inferiority, it was argued that women should have access to the same kind of education as men. This led to the creation of programs of study--notably at Smith and Bryn Mawr, and later spreading to other colleges--almost identical to those offered in the male Ivy League schools.

Flexner (1972) noted that it was actually first at Mt. Holyoke in 1837, originally opened as a three-year female seminary, that women's education went beyond preparation for wifehood and teaching. For the first time, stable financial backing was secured for a female institution;

and the school was one of the first to limit admission based on age, maturity and promise of intellectual potential. Furthermore, the curriculum was expanded to include the study of Natural Philosophy, Natural History, Chemistry, Physiology, and English grammar in addition to Theology and calisthenics (Flexner, 1972, p. 36). As a seminary, however, Mt. Holyoke still did not have the status of a four-year college.

Feminists and proponents of female education used women's success in the study of the classical and literary curriculum previously reserved for men as proof of women's capacity for equal intellectual work. However, the exposure to such a curriculum left many women college graduates frustrated and depressed. They found themselves "over-educated" for the limited traditional marriage roles, yet unprepared to pursue the more practical arts such as teaching. As William O'Neill described the plight of these women,

> Suddenly they found themselves not merely alone but alone in a society that had no use for them. Their liberal education did not prepare them to do anything in particular, and the stylized, carefully edited view of life it gave them bore little relation to the actual world. (in Roby, 1972, p. 415)

Various prominent women of the period, such as social reformer Jane Addams and social critic Charlotte Perkins, left personal accounts of their own periods of deep depression and confusion in trying to find meaningful roles for themselves as highly educated women in the nineteenth century (Conway, 1974).

In fact, large percentages of the graduates of women's colleges are estimated to have remained single, never pursuing the traditional wifely roles. The conflicts they experienced after graduation, however,

did not lead most to a more radical challenge to the ideology of women's role in society. For the most part, their discontent was siphoned off as they entered the new service professions which were attracting many American intellectuals (Conway, 1974). For women, entry into social work, nursing and increasingly the new "home economics," became an alternative to teaching and marriage. Yet, the service professions were rationalized as extensions of women's proper role as wife and mother based on similar assumptions of a "naturally" more nurturant and passive female character (Conway, 1974). Again, women's sphere of competence was bounded in ways which did not directly compete with the achievements of men.

By the early twentieth century, it was more than women's college graduates who questioned the appropriateness of their higher education. Responding to the burgeoning waves of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, various social commentators and public figures looked with alarm at the declining rate of marriage and childbearing among the middle and upper classes, particularly among college-educated women. Fears of "race suicide" among the Anglo-Saxon population mixed with Social Darwinist theory of the period linked women's pursuit of intellectual development with a reduction in her reproductive capacity. This became an explanation for the dwindling size of middle class families and led to attacks on the "new woman's" pursuit of independence (Kennedy, 1970, p. 47). While educators themselves did not dwell on the question of women's reproductive capacity, many colleges did begin to shift their policy on women students.

Within higher education, numerous coeducational institutions responded to the challenge to the usefulness of women's advanced study by either ridding themselves completely of female students or segregating them in separate colleges on their campuses. The official arguments for excluding women were often couched in terms of the negative effect female presence had on the scholarship and behavior of male students as well as the need for a distinct education to prepare women for their "special" vocation. Arguments were made that women were unfair competition for men, and that their presence in large numbers in certain liberal arts courses kept male students away (Roby, 1972, p. 416). Again, college administrators and faculty manifested concern for maintaining male enrollments and women's educational options were considered secondary. Among others, Stanford, the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, and Tufts all moved women into separate classes or colleges. Wesleyan went so far as to exclude women altogether (Roby, 1972, p. 417).

For the most part, when women were channeled into separate classes or institutions, they had access to poorer quality instruction and facilities, less well endowed programs, and educational programs designed to prepare them for their complementary womanly roles. In those institutions which accepted the equality of women's intellectual capacity, this usually was accompanied by a total denial of the real social, political and economic subordination of women in the larger society; and there was little in the curriculum which would bring women to an understanding of and ability to fundamentally challenge "woman's place."

While the admission of women into previously male institutions represented a victory of sorts, too often the concerns of such programs

rested primarily in terms of the mental and emotional welfare of male students. Repeatedly, women were treated as a "reserve" pool of students who were either encouraged to enroll or segregated into separate programs depending on the "higher" institutional needs for students and endowments and the needs of a changing economy.

On the other hand, the admission of women into coeducational schools often deprived women students of the experience of female collectivity which offered some sense of self direction. Even the women's colleges, however, failed to see the structural roots of women's subordinate status which could not be remedied solely by access to an educational program equal to that of men's. Conway (1974) has summarized that women's entry into higher education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not fundamentally challenge the beliefs in separate intellectual and professional sphere for women.

> Contrary to what educational historians have had to say up to now, it is not access to educational facilities which is the significant variable in tracing the "liberation" of women's minds. What matters is whether women's consciousness of themselves as intellects is altered. This did not take place as a result of the development of coeducation in the United States. It did not occur when women entered the service professions. (Conway, 1974, pp. 9-10)

The twentieth century.

In the early mid to latter part of the twentieth century, the basic patterns of women's entry into higher education have been repeated. During the depression and later during World War II, women were again sought out as students to counteract declining male enrollments. In the 1940's, numbers of men's colleges opened their doors to women for the

first time, and coeducational institutions actively recruited women into previously male courses of study. For example, at the University of Wisconsin during World War II, as during the Civil War, but never during peace, there were more women than men enrolled in the undergraduate schools and colleges (Roby, 1972, p. 420).

After World War II, however, the fear of an economic recession and the prospects of a flooded labor market contributed to the push to get women out of their wartime jobs and into the suburban home. The emerging "feminine-mystique" glorified women's role as helpmates to their husbands who were returning to school and climbing the ladders of success in new careers (Friedan, 1963). As a result of the new ideology of mother and wifehood, the lowered age of marriage and increased birthrate as well as the impact of the G.I. Bill benefits, the percentages of women undergraduates and advanced degree holders plummeted to below the levels of 1930. As an indicator between 1944 and 1950, the percentage of women as resident college students declined from the wartime high of 50% to the low of 30%. The prevailing attitudes towards women's education were consonant with the new emphasis on women's marriage roles. As an article in a 1958 issue of The Journal of Educational Sociology argued, educators must,

> help women understand that the homemaker's maternal role calls for knowledge and expertness as does any other occupational role. . . . Besides preparing women for this role, educators should attempt to elevate this role to the same esteem, if not glamor, that any male occupational role enjoys. (in Roby, 1972, p. 421)

Betty Friedan's (1963) picture of "co-ed" life in the 1950's and early 1960's suggested that many women students, even at the distinguished

women's colleges, were setting their future goals primarily in terms of their complementary roles as wives and mothers. In spite of the increasing numbers of women going to college, nearly two out of three students never completed their degrees and only small numbers were pursuing advanced graduate and professional work and careers. A study of Vassar students in the late 1950's concluded,

> Vassar girls, by and large do not expect to achieve fame, make a lasting contribution to society, pioneer any frontiers or otherwise create ripples in the placid order of things. . . . Not only is spinsterhood viewed as a personal tragedy, but offspring are considered essential to the full life. . . . In short, her future identity is largely encompassed by the projected role of wife/mother. (in Friedan, 1963, p. 143)

After her visit to Smith College in 1959, as well as to other colleges across the country, Friedan (1963) sensed an attitude among many of the students she interviewed that college was a phase to be gotten through rather "impatiently, efficiently, bored, but business-like" so that their real lives as wives and mothers in suburbia could begin (pp. 145-146). This shaping of aspirations was not accomplished without tension, however. Clearly, many women did feel serious engagement with their study, yet a prevalent attitude--that too serious a commitment to their work would leave them "unbalanced"--often led students to deny their own enthusiasm. Friedan blamed Freudian psychologists, functionalist social scientists and the "life-adjustment" school of educators for touting women's primary role as wife and mother and viewing any deviation as a rejection of femininity. While there were still those diehards who continued to encourage the intellectual development of women, many educators were made to feel guilty for "de-feminizing" American

women. According to Friedan, one famous women's college, left unnamed, went so far as to adopt the slogan, "We are not educating women to be scholars; we are educating them to be wives and mothers" (p. 151).

Until very recently, it was possible to encounter similar attitudes from faculty, administrators and educational literature regarding the purpose of women's education. Demonstrating the contemporary attitude of the male dominated academy toward women, Harris (1974) quoted Harvard President Nathan Pusey in a speech made during the Vietnam War. Commenting on the impact of the draft in reducing male applications to the graduate school, Pusey bemoaned the fate of the University stating,"'We shall be left with the blind, the lame and the women'" (Harris, 1974, p. 294). The treatment of women as secondary creatures is similarly reflected in the comment made by a Yale alumnus in response to demands of women students that more women be admitted to the college. "'We are all for the women; but Yale must produce a thousand male leaders every year'" (Harris, 1974, p. 294).

Rich (1975) has argued that in spite of women's admission into the mainstream of higher education, they have been made participants in a "man-centered university," i.e., one which prepares men to assume leadership in society in which study is based on a male generated intellectual tradition, and in which men are subtly and more openly confirmed as the primary shapers of human society inside and outside academia. Quoting from a 1972-73 catalog of one "coeducational" institution, Rich argued that the focus on the male student was not merely a product of the inherent sexist bias in the language, but reflected a genuine bias towards the male's experience.

> Brandeis University has set itself to develop the whole man, the sensitive, cultured, open-minded citizen who grounds his thinking in facts, who is intellectually and spiritually aware, who believes that life is significant, and who is concerned with society and the role he will play in it. (in Rich, 1975, p. 17)

A more systematic content analysis of a random sample of 100 college catalogs done by Astin, Harway and McNamara (1976) corroborates Rich's observation in its finding of repeated references to the male student, disproportionate representation of male students and faculty in photographs and limited space devoted to female activities and services.

While most catalogs, even in the sixties, would not have been as explicit as to state that women's education was secondary to that of men's, aimed primarily at preparing them to be enlightened companions, a prevalent attitude has assumed that going to college is just one of the "growing-up" experiences middle class girls should have before getting married (Graham, 1978). As late as 1969, Howe commented that,

> It is assumed that women who go to college are sitting out four years of their lives before becoming wives and mothers. . . . Generally speaking, the purpose of those responsible for the education of women has been to perpetuate their subordinate status. (1974, pp. 64-65)

In the 1960's and 1970's, much of the discussion of women's education has surfaced within the debates on the merits of single sex versus coeducational institutions. In fact, a very small percentage of undergraduates attend single sex institutions. From 1960 to 1973, the total number of women's colleges was down by 49%, and by 1972 they enrolled less than 10% of all female undergraduates (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, p. 55). Within the same time period, the percentage of all male institutions dropped even more markedly with yet a smaller

proportion of all male undergraduates attending separate institutions. Still the concern for single sex institutions has remained active for so long because of the stature of the Ivy League and Seven Sister schools.

The admission of women to such elite male bastions as Yale, Princeton and Amherst in recent years is indeed a victory. However, as Schwartz and Lever (1973) pointed out, the primary motive for opening of doors was not a commitment to broadening women's educational options. The real pressure came from the realization that male students were beginning to show preferences for enrolling in coeducational institutions. The admission of women was thus part of a strategy to insure continuing male enrollments. Commenting on the admission of women to Yale in 1969-70, Schwartz and Lever (1973) noted that,

> The "geisha girl theory of coeducation" did not mean that these schools recognized women's right to the same kind of education and preparation for a lifetime career as men. It merely meant that the presence of women on campus would augment the daily regimen of male leaders-to-be by simplifying their access to women as companions and future wives. (p. 74)

In contrast to the historical pattern described earlier--of women being admitted to male colleges in order to supplement declining male enrollments--in the more recent period, women were courted as a way of enticing men to continue applying.

On the other hand, the admission of men to the women's colleges in the sixties was partially motivated by a desire to bolster the status of those institutions. When men were admitted to Vassar and Bennington in the late sixties, it seemed that the rest of the women's colleges would follow suit (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973;

Showalter & Ohmann, 1971). Interestingly, some feminists joined the critics of separate women's colleges arguing that they did not serve women's interests enough (Harris, 1974; Rossi, 1970; Schneider, 1974; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971). Given smaller endowments, a narrower course of study and more limited facilities--even at the best known schools--they argued, the women's colleges had been reduced to "pale imitations" of the comparable men's institutions.

Arguments in support of the women's colleges have emphasized the greater leadership opportunities for women, more encouragement for the pursuit of less traditionally female studies, higher rates of achievement, and greater responsiveness to women's "special"needs" (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973; Rossi, 1970). It has also been argued that the absence of men in classes would encourage freer, more active participation among women students facilitating their fullest intellectual development. However, various anecdotal accounts have suggested that this has not always been the case (Schneider, 1974; Schwartz & Lever, 1973). All women classes can be characterized by greater timidity and less willingness to challenge professors and other students if there is no conscious effort to counter women's typically less confident and less competitive learned style.

With respect to achievement, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973) has quoted studies finding higher rates of achievement for graduates of women's colleges in comparison to those from coeducational institutions. Tidball's (1973) analysis has suggested that part of this difference may be related to the higher percentage of female faculty at women's colleges. She also found negative correlations

between the ratio of male to female undergraduates and the proportion of women achievers in coeducational institutions suggesting the importance of the dominant female environment.

In more recent research, however, using similar indeces of achievement, Oates and Williamson (1978) have demonstrated that the higher achievement of women's college graduates is largely due to the pattern of the highly selective Seven Sister colleges. Here they speculate that socioeconomic factors could play an important part (in addition to selectivity) in contributing to the pattern of high achievement.

Oates and Williamson also questioned the assumption that the women's colleges, in fact, encouraged women's greater pursuit of nontraditional careers. They compared the occupational distribution of graduates from the Seven Sisters, non-Seven Sister women and coeducational institutions, and found no significant differences in terms of traditional versus nontraditional patterns. In a study of vocational and educational interests of college students, Astin and Panos (1969) found only a slight tendency for women's colleges to channel students out of education and teaching and into the natural sciences.

At a more ideological level, some of the earlier feminist criticisms of the women's colleges were focused on those institutions' failure to seriously address women's real subordinate status within the larger society in their rush to prove women's intellectual equality with men. Writing specifically about Bryn Mawr, Schneider (1974) challenged the college's shortsighted and ultimately elitist assumption that women could escape their secondary status in society through access to

"superior" education. Quoting from some of her own contemporaries, Schneider highlighted the contradictions riddling the "rigorous" education they were encouraged to pursue. Just as Jane Addams and her cohorts had experienced a tension in the early part of the twentieth century between the demanding education they had access to and the actual social roles available to women, students in the sixties and early seventies faced dilemmas about the ultimate purpose of their education.

> Once it is made clear--and it is eminently clear in present-day America--that women will not be accorded positions of responsibility, their education begins to develop all the attributes of irrelevance: it becomes sterile, unspontaneous, academic, and ornamental rather than useful. The students themselves are acutely aware that their expensive educations will be of marginal use to society, and their already considerable feelings of uselessness. . . are compounded by this apparent squandering of resources in pursuit of egotistical self-improvement. (Schneider, 1974, pp. 282-283)

Rather than leading to a more solid foundation of confidence and independent direction which would truly prepare women to better struggle against sexist barriers and prejudice in the larger society, Schneider argued that the educational environment at Bryn Mawr often promoted self-denigration and self-doubt which interfered with commitment required for advanced academic success.

While various feminist educators and commentators have criticized the limitations of the women's colleges, there have been differences in the solutions proposed. Some have supported the general movement towards coeducation arguing that direct contact and confrontation with men was the best preparation for women to strengthen themselves (Rossi, 1971). Others, however, pointed out that coeducation was no clear panacea. In the midst of the debate on the future status of Douglass, the

coordinate women's college at Rutgers University, Showalter and Howard (1970) defined the real issue as the appropriate content and not the form of women's education. While criticizing Douglass' orientation of training women for service rather than leadership, for adjustment to social limitations rather than challenge, they added that coeducation did not necessarily bring women equality.

> To the extent that [coeducation] ignores women in the curriculum and otherwise reinforces the dominant cultural themes of female submissiveness, service and subordination, versus male aggressiveness, leadership and dominance, coeducation perpetuates only a guise of male/female equality of educational opportunity. (Showalter & Howard, 1970, p. 1)

Paradoxically, while some feminists have made the harshest criticisms of the shortcomings of the women's colleges, the women's movement has, in fact, given some of the remaining separate institutions a new rationale for their continued existence. As the report from Smith College which recommended the maintenance of a separate college states,

> At the present time, when the status and roles of women in American society are being reexamined with a view to their improvement, an important option that should remain open is attendance at a college of the highest caliber in which women are unquestionably first-class citizens. (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, p. 71)

In addition to Smith, Mt. Holyoke and Wellseley have also decided to maintain independent status. Recently, some of these colleges have experienced increased enrollments for the first time in years. It is also true that in line with recommendations from the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1974), each of these colleges has entered into arrangements with nearby male and/or coeducational institutions in order to enable students to pursue less traditionally female studies, e.g., accounting and engineering.

The review of the history and ideology of women's entry into higher education makes it clear, however, that the maintenance of separate institutions by itself is not sufficient for preparing women to effectively challenge their overall subordinate status in the larger society. If it is true--as a Mt. Holyoke undergraduate recently lamented--that the impact of women's liberation at the college has mostly meant that now students carry around copies of the Wall Street Journal and plan careers as stock brokers, then access to "first class" education will still not "change the status of women with regard to men, but merely the status of women with regard to other women" (Howe & Ahlum, 1973, p. 395). Schneider (1974) concluded about Bryn Mawr that to maintain integrity as a women's college, the institution would have to choose to address actively the sources of women's oppression, reexamining its own goals, attitudes towards and social policy regarding students and devoting significant resources to research, publication and curricular reform regarding women. Only then, she argued, could students be adequately prepared to move collectively "to assume their rightful positions as functioning adults in the world" (Schneider, 1974, p. 292).

In the conclusion to her review of the literature on women's education in America, Girard (1974) has emphasized the damage women have suffered from the perpetuation of educational ideology, whether articulated by men or by women, which has fundamentally accepted the contours of a male-dominated society.

> Ideologies of women's education were developed within totally male-dominated culture. What was perceived by men as desirable for women had an obviously direct connection only to what men perceived as beneficial for themselves. Women do not need, cannot withstand

> without pain and damage definition on such foundations. Women and not men, women who are attempting to recast women's role in society must begin to define what is in their self interests and what is not. (Girard, 1974, p. 33)

Iskin (1976) has suggested that a liberating education for women must be based on a rejection of the conventional concepts of "being a woman" in order to allow women to pursue their "own needs, points of view and aspirations" (p. 4). Alternative feminist education programs call for an explicit and complete analysis of women's secondary status in the larger society rather than either accepting that position or trying to deny it. Alternative programs have been established to facilitate such analysis in settings in which the full implications for change can be articulated, if not directly acted upon.

The Curriculum

In addition to the overriding ideology shaping attitudes towards women's education, feminists have pointed to the sexist bias in the curriculum as a factor which has hampered education from ultimately changing "either women's images of their own inferiority or men's images of women as inferior creatures" (Howe & Ahlum, 1973, pp. 395-396). Building on the concept of the "hidden curriculum" articulated by educational sociologists (Jackson, 1968; Spindler, 1963), feminists have examined the sexist learning which goes beyond the official curriculum of specific subject matter, lesson plans, course objects, and syllabi. As Frazier and Sadker (1973) noted, the awareness of male and female roles develops largely from,

> the total and constant immersion in the hidden curriculum--the repetition and continual incidental contacts students have with one another, with the teacher, with the rituals and rules of the school, with the subtle meanings in textbooks. (p. 81)

At the college level, the male bias in the curriculum is reflected in the fundamental organization and structure of the academic disciplines, the accepted methodologies and criteria for legitimate knowledge. The following section reviews literature which critiques the male bias in the curriculum at both of these levels.

The hidden curriculum.

This section includes a selective review of literature regarding the sexist hidden curriculum as reflected in biases in textbooks and other educational materials, stereotyped attitudes of teachers and counselors, and the channeling of males and females into stereotyped academic and extracurricular pursuits. In addition, the section concludes with evidence of the impact of the hidden curriculum in shaping women's educational and vocational aspirations.

Textbooks, attitudes and channeling. Much of the feminist analysis of the hidden curriculum has focused on the consistent patterns of sexist bias reflected in the omission, distortion and denigration of women's images and experiences in textbooks, course syllabi and other educational materials throughout the educational system (Federbuch, 1974; Feminists on Children's Media, 1971; Lockheed & Ekstrom, 1977; Pugliese & Chipley, 1976; Women on Words and Images, 1974). In children's literature and elementary textbooks, bias is evident in terms of the representation of

male versus female character, the roles and characteristics associated with both. Various studies have reported the consistent under-representation of females in story titles, illustrations and central characters, in children's literature (Nilsen, 1971), reading textbook series (Feminists on Words and Images, 1974), and in other subject textbooks (Britton & Lumpkin, 1976; Federbush, 1974; Frazier & Sadker, 1973).

In the representation of "notable" historical figures and in biographies, women are also overwhelmingly absent. Outside of Florence Nightengale, Betsy Ross and occasionally Elizabeth Cady Stanton, most other women prominent in social, cultural, intellectual, and political activity lie dead and unrecognized (Nilsen, 1971; Trecker, 1974).

It is not only the number of males versus females represented which reflects females' inferior status, however. It is also the stereotyping of those images presented which spells out that "girls are losers." On the whole, boys are offered a much wider repretoire of roles and behaviors than girls, and are shown to possess those traits universally regarded as positive and desirable (Women on Words and Images, 1974). Boys are active, adventurous, independent, smart, strong, brave, competent, fun-loving, and curious. Girls are emotional, passive, boring, stupid, scared, homebodies, and momma's helpers. They are repeatedly depicted as having less perseverance and moral strength than males (Frazier & Sadker, 1973), and are as a class often presented as the victims of male pranks and aggression (Women on Words and Images, 1974).

In terms of adult models, women do not fare much better. While men are shown in a variety of exciting jobs, e.g., as explorers,

scientists, writers, astronauts, doctors, policemen, and as fathers too, women are almost exclusively shown as mothers. When they are portrayed as workers, their occupations fall within the very narrow range of the traditional careers as teachers, nurses and librarians. In the rare cases that mothers are also shown as workers, this is generally presented in terms of necessity rather than choice (Rowell, 1977; Women on Words and Images, 1974).

At the secondary level, biases and omissions are similarly present. History textbooks are notorious in their minimal mention of notable women, their general disregard for the areas of primary activity and struggle in most women's lives, and in the presentation of American women as marginal characters--incapable of sustained organizational activity, concerned with trivia and clearly on the fringe of the "important" events in history (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977; Trecker, 1974). In the language and English curricula, similar patterns arise. In fiction, students find female characters portrayed as insipid, ineffectual and passive creatures who are overwhelmingly concerned "with boys." Female characters are often treated with hostility and are often dismissed with demeaning attitudes (Frazier & Sadker, 1973). In the social sciences, the normative behavior is generally presented as the male experience and women are treated as "exceptions" to the rule (Weisstein, 1970; Weitzman & Rizzo, 1974).

Feminist criticisms of curricular material presented in the public schools can be summarized in the following three points:

1. In conjunction with the larger society, the sex-stereotyping in curricular materials shapes children's sense of what is normative and what is possible; from this perspective, the options presented for females are very limited.

2. The images presented are not only limited but they inaccurately reflect women's changing experience. While most adult women in children's textbooks are shown as happy wives and mothers, in fact, nearly 50% of all adult women work in the labor force; and with the increasing rates of divorce, more and more women are finding themselves living along or as the sole supporters of their families (Blau, 1972).

3. Finally, stereotyping in the curriculum reinforces the "separate and unequal" dichotomy which associates the masculine with the "positive and important" on one hand and the feminine with the "negative and trivial" on the other, contributing to females' lowered self-esteem, aspirations and expectations.

At the college level, the male bias in course content continues to obscure women's experience and history from critical study and perpetuates the dominant ideology of women's subordinate status. Looking at the literary curriculum offered beyond the freshman level in the English department at one woman's college, Showalter (1974) found that of all the writers studied, 313 were male versus 17 female. Examining the widely used Norton Anthology, she discovered a similar under-representation of women writers, a mere six in contrast to the 169 male authors. As a result of this centering of the curriculum on the male experience, Showalter suggested that women students have been damaged in terms of

their self-concepts, confidence and expectations.

> The masculine culture, reinforced by the presence of a male author and, usually, a male professor, is so all-encompassing that few women students can sustain the sense of a positive feminine identity in the face of it. Women are estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity, in part because they do not see it mirrored and given resonance by literature. Instead they are expected to identify as readers with a masculine experience and perspective which is presented as the human one. As critics, too, they are required to maintain this identification. (Showalter, 1974, pp. 319-320)

The bias which Showalter identified within the literary curriculum is found in consistent ways in most of the disciplines which dominate college study. Repeatedly, women are denied a reflection of their own experience as the norms which determine what is worth knowing about human society are set in reference to the lives of men.

> When history is taught, it is the history of male warriors, rulers, tradesmen, investors, explorers. When literature is studied, it is the literature of male writers recording <u>their</u> lives, <u>their</u> perspective. . . . Psychology reflects the male experience and male points of view. . . . The perspective of theology, art, history, music, political science is parallel. The implicit curricular message to women students has been simple: <u>men</u> work, write, and make history, psychology, theology; women get married, have babies, and rear them. (Howe & Ahlum, 1973, p. 401)

Another dimension of the hidden curriculum involves the attitudes and behaviors of teachers which reflect stereotyped notions of "appropriate" male and female activity as well as lower expectations for female achievement (Astin, Harway & McNamara, 1976; Lockheed & Ekstrom, 1977). As the research of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) has suggested, there is a significant relationship between teacher expectations--whether conscious or unconscious--and students' self-concepts and behavior. In their review of research on sex discrimination in the educational system,

Lockheed and Ekstrom (1977) found substantial evidence that "the educational system, in conjunction with the larger society, produces males and females with differeing cognitive skills, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations" (p. 7).

While Patricia Sexton's well-known book The Feminized Male (1969) focused on the problems boys have adapting to the "female controlled" environment of the elementary school, feminists identified the problem of girls who learn to adjust only too well to early demands for conforming and submissive behavior, often getting "lost" in the educational shuffle (Frazier & Sadker, 1973; Levy, 1972). At the elementary level, studies have found overall greater teacher responsiveness to male versus female students on both positive and negative dimensions, i.e., not only do boys receive more disapproval than girls, but they also receive more approval, are more listened to and taught more actively than girls (Frazier & Sadker, 1973; Lockheed & Ekstrom, 1977; Sears & Feldman, 1974).

Teacher attitudes towards "good student" behavior for girls versus boys also reflect stereotyped expectations (Frazier & Sadker, 1973; Howe, 1974; Whitehurst, 1977). Teachers tend to reward girls for conforming behavior, e.g., being neat, appreciative, cooperative, and obliging, while boys are rewarded for being active, adventurous, curious, and enterprising, basically encouraging greater male independence and assertiveness.

Channeling males and females into separate activities and tracking them into segregated classes also reinforce stereotyped standards of appropriate gender interests and pursuits. At the elementary level,

girls are encouraged in more "female" activities such as reading, music and art, while boys are expected to pursue "male" interests, e.g., mechanical and physical activity, science and math. Whitehurst (1977) noted that even in more progressive schools, there is still considerable conformity to sex-typed behavior when there is not specific teacher intervention.

At the secondary level, sex segregated classes are also common, e.g., auto mechanics and shop for boys, home economics for girls. While the legality of such segregation has been challenged in recent years, many schools still make it difficult for girls to enter traditionally male classes comfortably. Similarly, at the extracurricular level, girls are encouraged to pursue more "feminine" activities such as "future teachers," "future homemakers," music, dance and language clubs, while boys find support for participation in the more visible and more amply funded athletic activities. Such channeling is further reinforced by school counselors who continue to hold stereotyped attitudes towards sex roles using biased test materials and career information which reinforce girls' more limited options (Astin et al., 1976; Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973; Olver, 1975).

Sexist attitudes are prevalent not only among teachers in the public schools. Feminist academics have also noted lower expectations and stereotyped attitudes towards female students among male faculty, particularly at the graduate level (Harris, 1974; Howe, 1974; Showalter, 1974). Harris (1974) collected a particularly revealing set of comments made to female students by male faculty which range from challenging students' commitment to their studies, insinuating that married women

were shirking domestic responsibilities, directing women towards traditional female fields of study, and suggesting marriage as an acceptable alternative to academic work (pp. 297-298). Heiss (1970) concluded from interviews with top administrators and faculty in ten leading graduate schools that sex "was the most discriminatory factor" used to determine admissions to graduate studies; that objections to women's admission was often based on assumptions that women would "just marry" (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, p. 93).

Women's educational and vocational aspirations. The stereotyped attitudes and biased expectations of teachers, counselors and advisors throughout the educational system undoubtedly contribute to women's lower self-esteem and self-confidence, and more restricted educational and occupational aspirations relative to men's (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973; Frazier & Sadker, 1973; Lockheed & Ekstrom, 1977). At the secondary level, studies have found greater concern for appearance and popularity than academic achievement among female students as well as lesser confidence in their ability to do college work--in spite of higher average grades (Frazier & Sadker, 1973). Studies have also revealed that of the qualified high school graduates who do not go on to college, from 75 to 90% are female (Astin et al., 1976).

Astin et al. (1976) also reported on a 1972 study of high school students' educational and occupational aspirations finding lower expectations among the females. Almost the same percentage of males and females (30 and 29% respectively) indicated that they would like to complete four years of college. However, 33% of the women versus 41%

of the men indicated interest in pursuing graduate or professional degrees. In terms of what they actually planned to achieve, almost twice as many males as females (17 versus 9%) responded that they would obtain advanced degrees (Astin et al., 1976, pp. 55-56).

Data on anticipated majors and careers of college freshmen also reflect women's greater orientation towards traditionally female occupations which demand less advanced schooling. On one hand, data on the 1974 "National Freshmen Norms" by the American Council on Education revealed a significant decline in women's traditional choice of elementary and secondary school teaching since 1970 (from 31 to 11.9% of all freshmen) and a noted increase in interest in business (from 4 to 8.5%). Yet the most popular choices among freshmen women were still in the female dominated professions including education, non-medical health fields, social science (largely social work), and "other" nontechnical fields. The career choices of black female undergraduates were less stereotyped than females overall, particularly in terms of interest in business; however, the top four choices were still in predominantly female fields comparable to the general pattern for undergraduate women (Freeman, R., 1976). In contrast, the top four choices among males included: business, engineering, "other" nontechnical and technical fields (Astin et al., 1976, p. 32).

At the college level, women are still more likely to be concentrated at smaller, less selective and less affluent institutions, disproportionately enrolled in Catholic four-year and private two-year colleges, and highly under-represented at elite colleges (Astin et al., 1976). Beyond the undergraduate level, until very recently there was a marked decline

in the percentage of women degree holders. In 1960, for example, women received 35% of the Bachelor's degrees, 32% of Master's, and 10% of the Doctorate's. By 1976, the percentages had gone up significantly at each level, although there was still a large discrepancy at the highest level; women comprised 45.6% of the Bachelor's degrees, 46.4% of the Master's, and 22.9% of the Doctorate's (Bernay, 1978).

In terms of the rising percentage of women doctorate holders, part of the increase has resulted from the declining number of male doctorate holders (Baranger, 1976). Also, much of the increase is accounted for by the jump in women 35 years and older returning to school after child-rearing (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973). This fact suggests that many younger women are still curtailing or interrupting their academic studies.

While women have been awarded increasingly higher percentages of graduate degrees, the largest numbers are still earned in more traditionally female fields (Baranger, 1976; Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973). In 1973-74, over 50% of the Master's degrees awarded women were in the fields of home economics, library science, foreign languages, education, health fields, and letters (in descending order). In each of these fields, the percentage of women at the Master's level was lower than that at the Bachelor's level (Astin et al., 1976).

Rossi (1973) noted that the variable most sharply differenting women from men in graduate training is their higher attrition rate at both the Master's and Doctorate levels. Explanations for this pattern have pointed to a variety of factors including: discrimination in

admissions policies, inadequate and unequal financial assistance (especially in terms of fellowships), few opportunities for part-time study which would allow women to better combine marriage, child-rearing and study, and internal factors such as lower motivation to pursue advanced study resulting from lifetime socialization into traditional female sex roles (Astin et al., 1976; Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973; Patterson & Sells, 1973; Roby, 1973; Rossi, 1973). Various studies have also suggested, however, that women's commitment to completing graduate studies is affected by their perceptions of faculty support as well as their frequency of interaction (Baranger, 1976; Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973; Holmstrom & Holmstrom, 1973; Rossi, 1973). Analyses of the 1969 American Council on Education survey of faculty and student attitudes revealed that a significant minority of both male and female graduate students, from 10 to 30 and from 15 to 45%, respectively, agreed that women were taken less seriously by faculty members than were men (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, p. 96). The same survey revealed that from 20 to 40% of male faculty and from 4 to 24% of female faculty agreed that "female graduate students. . . are not as dedicated as males" (Baranger, 1976).

Hochschild (1975) has suggested that women faculty members may realize that "commitment to study" is not a simple trait--present or not; that perceived dedication is related to one's incentive to go on, and that lack of dedication may reflect a rational response to the anticipation of being ignored. This interpretation is corroborated by the results of Holmstrom and Holmstrom's (1973) analysis of the ACE survey which found that women graduate students' overall greater perception of

a lack of faculty support and reports of lower interaction with professors were related to higher reports of emotional stress and decreasing commitment to remain in school.

As a result of pressure from feminists as well as government guidelines prohibiting sex discrimination in admissions to graduate school, it is less likely for one to encounter the same kind of openly discriminatory attitudes as Harris (1974) and Heiss (1970) found. Many graduate women can attest from personal experience, however, particularly within traditionally male departments, that women must still prove themselves to be twice as good as men in order to get faculty recognition. When faculty members in a heavily male department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst still expect female graduate students to set up coffee and serving tables for professional conferences (as reported by one graduate woman), it is hard to imagine how these faculty could accept women students as real peers with the men in the department. It is also hard to imagine how the women students could not feel belittled by such expectations.

Baranger (1976) and Rossi (1973) have both suggested that more recent evidence of lower attrition rates for females in certain graduate programs may be the result of the alternative support networks students (and sometimes faculty) have created through women's caucuses and committees. Such networks of encouragement and assistance among women themselves they suggested, may counteract the generally less supportive faculty attitudes towards female students.

Overall, women's lowered self-esteem and greater ambivalence about commitment to advanced study are not only the product of their experiences within the educational system. That system reinforces and reflects basic values and assumptions which pervade the larger society. It is undeniable, however, that the hidden curriculum of biased educational materials, sexist teacher attitudes and unequal expectations for females versus male students are part of the "nonconscious ideology" (Bem & Bem, 1972) which limits women's potential for development.

The structure of knowledge and the academic disciplines.

As a way of explaining the bias reflected in the distortion and omission of women within the dominant curriculum, feminists have turned to analyses of the very structure of the academic disciplines and the standards of acceptable knowledge. As Arlene Raven, a founder of the alternative Feminist Studio Workshop educational program in Los Angeles quoted in Iskin (1976) stated,

> The University is a male institution. In its beliefs about knowledge, in the concept of the knowledge it transmits in the way it transmits that knowledge, and in the types of interaction it causes among people, the University is not built for people who are at odds with the male stereotype but for those who honor it. (pp. 4-5)

It is not only women who have been left out of the curriculum but other "marginal" groups as well, specifically the working class and racial and ethnic minorities.

Feminist scholars are quick to point out that the bias in the curriculum is less a product of an intentional plot than a logical reflection of the interests of the elite white males that dominate the

universities; that it is a consequence of the kinds of questions academics ask and the assumptions they bring to their work (Gordon, Buhle & Shrom, 1971; Millman & Kantor, 1975; Rosen, 1974; Showalter, 1974; Weisstein, 1970). As Rosen (1974) commented on the study of history,

> History, after all is usually written by professional historians whose ideas and values reflect the attitudes of our dominant white male culture. . . . Traditional history has been most concerned with the recreation of the elite intellectual, military, economic, and political powers who controlled other people's lives. (p. 327)

It follows that minority and working class women have been even more thoroughly overlooked or dismissed within the curriculum than white middle class women. Gerda Lerner (1972) described the "double victimization" black women have experienced at the hands of white historians, noting that,

> Black women have been doubly victimized by scholarly neglect and racist assumptions. Belonging as they do to two groups which have traditionally been treated as inferiors by American society--Blacks and women--they have been doubly invisible. Their records lie buried, unread, infrequently noticed, and even more seldom interpreted. (pp. xvii-xviii)

A major factor preventing male academics from accurately researching, studying and presenting the female experience is the bias in their accepted assumptions about women's role in society. Again, refering to historians, Rosen (1974) wrote,

> Unless historians' own experiences challenge their conditioned responses concerning the proper role of women in society, they have little but their prejudices with which to guide them into the unfamiliar world of female feelings, motivations and ideas. (p. 328)

The interests and perspectives of male academics have also distorted the study of the social world through sociology and the social sciences

(Millman & Kanter, 1975). Millman and Kanter go beyond the identification of the distortion of women's experience in the sociology curriculum pulling together a collection of essays which analyze the basic theories, paradigms, substantive concerns, and methodologies which limit the possibilities of accurately portraying the female experience. An example of one of the underlying assumptions they identified which has biased social science research is the model of the "single society" with respect to men and women, i.e., the belief that generalizations can be made about individuals' experiences within the social world without regard to sex (p. xiii). Millman and Kanter have pointed out that studies repeatedly indicate that women and men, in fact, experience the same situations differently; this understanding they argued must become part of the basic assumptions of research which attempts to understand human behavior.

Feminist theorist Mary Daly has emphasized that the negative consequences of the dominant male defined methodologies are not only the resulting restrictions on the vision of male academics. More seriously, she has argued, the hegemony of such methods has distorted women's own ability to see and to reflect clearly upon their own experience in the world (Rich, 1975). Daly adds that women must struggle to rediscover and reinterpret female culture by approaching knowledge in new ways. As quoted in Rich (1975), she writes, "under patriarchy, Method has wiped out women's questions so totally that even women have not been able to hear and formulate our own questions to meet our own experiences" (p. 31). According to Rich, women "need a reorganization of knowledge of perspectives and analytical tools. . . a radical reinvention of subject lines of inquiry and methods" in order to pursue fully the study of women's

lives and to create a more balanced understanding of human culture (pp. 30-31).

In addition to the bias inherent in the methods and basic assumptions of the academic disciplines, the compartmentalization of knowledge and the subsequent fragmentation of human experience fostered within the university works against the comprehensive understanding of women's experience and the conditions defining her oppression (Gordon, 1975; Hoffman, 1971; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971; Rich, 1975, 1976; Webb, 1974). In arguing thus, feminists build on the New Left critique of the role of the university in advanced capitalist society developed in the sixties (Davidson, 1971; Gorz, 1974; Lichtman, 1971). The Left argued that the increasing specialization of knowledge and the academic division of labor create a dehumanizing and irrelevant curriculum which separates: facts from social meanings, thought from action, rational and technical expertise from social and moral responsibility, intellectual pursuit from emotion and feeling. Feminists have particularly highlighted the destructive effects of the dichotomy created between emotion and reason which contributes to a denial of the "personal" as a legitimate source of knowledge. As Nancy Hoffman (1971), women's studies teacher, described the problem,

> To make a separation between personal and intellectual life, emotion and reason is to destroy a human, to make her a microcosm of our fragmented society by denying her the "direct sensuous apprehension of thought" or its counterpart--the rational apprehension of emotion. (p. 20)

The importance of grounding intellectual understanding in the personal is particularly important for women because so much of what they learn denies women's real experience in the world. In the search for an

understanding of the forces shaping women's lives, all theoretical systems and explanations must be critically assessed to see if they genuinely speak to these realities. Hoffman (1971) continued,

> If one accepts self-consciously and out of the need for order an explanation of reality in conflict with the way one experiences reality, then this intellectual divided state either shuts one off from others. . . or more dangerous, it leads to tacit acceptance by a group of a theory they know to be out of joint. (p. 20)

The polarization of the "subjective" and the "objective", "fact" and "feeling" the "personal" and the "intellectual" is further criticized by feminists since these artificial divisions reflect the partriarchal polarities created between the "feminine" and the "masculine". Historically, this polarization has embodied an implicit elevation of that traditionally associated with the masculine and a devaluation of that associated with the feminine (Rich, 1976). White (1971) described these divisions as fundamentally affecting the fabric of learning within universities.

> All our colleges and universities are male-dominated, even when students are exclusively female; most students are most responsive to a discoursive, objective approach and are unwilling or unable to make the connections between social and personal experience. . . . Our subject matter is almost always divorced from feeling or from possibilities of action; most teachers are highly impersonal and if they weren't. . . their students would be as embarrassed as hell. (p. 31)

The separation of facts from meaning, and of thought from action, has been rationalized by the liberal ideal of "academic neutrality" and the positivist emphasis on "value-free research." Feminists join the New Left critics charging that the ideal of "neutrality" obscures the university's role in perpetuating ideology which supports existing

power relations in the society (Gordon, 1975; Webb, 1974). As Gordon (1975) pointed out,

> Of course there are dangers in being partisan scholars. But there are worse dangers in posing as objective. . . . In the academic world, we still need to repeat that those who accept the traditional academic assumptions are, in fact, as political as those who reject them. . . . Since no one can achieve real political neutrality, those who claim it are misleading people. (p. 565)

Furthermore, she added, those who seek "neutrality" give up a critical distance on their culture accepting as natural and permanent "traditions which are, in fact, disintegrating" (p. 565).

During the 1960's, the New Left shattered the myth of neutrality by exposing the university's complicity with the military-industrial complex during the Vietnam War (Wallerstein & Starr, 1971). Feminists argue that under the appearance of "objective study and research," the academy perpetuates an ideology of male dominance and superiority which reinforces the unequal power relations between the sexes. Objective research has, for example, "fathered" psychological theories of innate female inferiority (Weisstein, 1970), histories which ignore the lives and experiences of most women (Gordon, Buhle & Shrom, 1971; Lerner, 1971; Rosen, 1974), and literary criticism which defines women as "minor" writers and ignores the elements of sexual politics reflected in literature (Howe, 1976; Showalter, 1974).

Feminists claim that the study of women <u>should</u> have a clear perspective which is <u>not</u> neutral. This perspective should assume that existing forms of sexual inequality and the system of male domination are destructive to women's development; that education should be directed towards an

analysis of the roots of women's oppression as well as theory which suggests alternative possibilities (Howe & Ahlum, 1973; National Women's Studies Association, 1977; Salper, 1971; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971; Webb, 1974). In other words, intellectual pursuit must be integrated with a political perspective. "All that we teach should have intrinsic to it an understanding of the power dynamic of patriarchy and a purpose that is constantly up front about action against this dynamic" (Webb, 1974, p. 415).

The Social Relations of the Classroom

The feminist critique of the educational system emphasizes that it is not only the content and structure of the curriculum which has hampered women's development, but further the way in which learning takes place which is significant. The social relations of the classroom, i.e., those roles and relationships which students have among themselves and which they have with respect to teachers, are a determining element of how women learn and shape women's view of themselves and their educational possibilities. As White (1971) wrote, reflecting on women's education in traditional classrooms, "content varies from year to year, but the form--the structure of rules, punishments and rewards--remains the same and often influences students' lives more directly than the content" (p. 34).

Specifically, feminists have criticized (a) the pervasive ethic of competition which sets student against student for rewards and recognition, and (b) the traditional authority of teacher over students which

maintains the former as dispenser of knowledge and grades (Howe & Ahlum, 1973; Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971; Webb, 1974). Competitive grading and the hierarchical authority of teachers have been criticized by other educational reform movements, e.g., within the "free" schools and "free" universities of the sixties, as obstacles to authentic learning and as reinforcers of authority relations in the larger society (Graubard, 1972; Lauter & Howe, 1970). The feminist critique has added to this analysis the particular ways in which women are oppressed by such relationships. Webb (1974) argued that these "very operating assumptions of American universities" are antithetical to the feminist goals of developing collective analyses of women's oppression as well as collective strategies for change.

> Rather than building collectivity, [universities] divide by competitiveness and grade hierarchies. Rather than creating group solidarity, they create an intellectual elite whose social status, but not real power, is meant to be above those who have never received a higher education. (Webb, 1974, p. 411)

Clearly, the pressures placed on students in universities to pursue individual advancement and success tend to work against mutual support and recognition of shared interests.

Beyond the specific contradiction with feminist goals, the competitiveness encouraged in most classrooms leaves many women students at a disadvantage in light of socialization pressures experienced by many to deny assertiveness and to avoid confrontation. Many women are particularly inclined to avoid direct intellectual competition with men; as a result, they often retreat to more passive roles in the classroom leaving the arena of competition to men (Harris, 1974; Hochschild, 1975;

Showalter & Ohmann, 1971). Fears about competition and argumentativeness, as well as ambivalence about ambition, place women in graduate studies where such attributes are most highly valued at a particular disadvantage (Graham, 1978; Hochschild, 1975). Feminists have recognized the need to work against the debilitating effects of socialization into female compliance and submissiveness. At the same time, however, many have questioned the gratuitous competitiveness and argumentativeness that often characterize academic "discourse" and classroom discussions calling for new ground rules in educational practice.

Another dimension of the social relations of traditional classrooms reexamined by feminists relates to the authority relationships between teachers and students. The questioning of competitive relationships among students finds a corollary in the feminist emphasis on mutual learning among teachers and students (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, Howe & Ahlum, 1973; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971). The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973) has suggested that the emphasis in women's studies on the active participation of students in the learning process follows partly from the recognition of teachers that the subject matter is novel and "frankly that they are learners rather than experts" (p. 79). While this is part of the explanation, there are also more principled reasons behind such practice.

To the extent that teachers assume roles as "ultimate" arbitrators and authorities, many women students' training in compliant "good student" behavior is reinforced, often to the detriment of the development of independent thinking (Showalter, 1974). When teacher/authorities are also men, as most are at the university, women's tendency to look up to

males as their superiors is also reinforced. Rich (1975) and Rossi (1973) have both identified the potential problem women students face, especially at the graduate level, in terms of establishing relationships with male mentors. Both have acknowledged that many women have benefitted from the encouragement and training of gifted male teachers. Rich (1975) has noted the unfortunate consequence, however, of women learning to identify more strongly with male teachers than with other women, and to seek success through male approval.

> [The male scholar-teacher] may well be in a position to give her more, in terms of influence, training and emotional gratification than any academic woman on the scene. In a double sense, he confirms her suspicion that she is "exceptional". If she succeeds, it is partly that she has succeeded in pleasing <u>him</u>, winning his masculine interest and attention. The eroticism of the father-daughter relationship resonates here, and romance and flirtation, are invisibly present even where there is no actual seduction. (Rich, 1975, pp. 28-29)

Rossi (1973) identified the problem of the potential undermining of self-confidence of a woman who actually engages in a sexual liaison with her male mentor. In such cases, women can find it difficult to separate out legitimate praise and recommendations from gestures of seduction or responses to sexual alliance. In their recent work on the adult male life cycle, Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) approached this problem from the perspective of the potential male mentor. They have pointed out the difficulty men have before their early forties in establishing such relationships with younger women. (It may be speculated that such relationships are still complex at older ages.) Levinson et al. suggested that obstacles to healthy mentor relationships can include male assumptions that women are not as likely to advance in their

careers (therefore, that it is not worth their while to "waste energy"), as well as the male tendency to shape relationships with younger women to suit their own needs and orientations. They identified the potential for male academics either to treat women as "exceptional intellects" only, thereby denying the student's total person, to create supportive but paternalistic relationships, or to use women for explicit sexual interests (p. 238).

According to Rich (1975), the mentor relationship itself is not the problem but rather the entangled sexual politics that are so often interwoven. She envisioned a "woman-centered" university in which more older women would be available to younger ones, thereby eliminating some of the eroticism and glamor associated with the male teacher and providing new models of relationships between women. At the same time, however, some feminist educators have warned women faculty not to fall into the hierarchical authority roles traditionally reserved for men (Rich, 1975; Hochschild, 1975; Webb, 1974; White, 1971). According to this perspective, feminists must challenge all power relationships which support larger systems of dominance. Addressing herself to teachers of women's studies, White (1971) warned that,

> If we don't renounce that part of our authority which is inauthentic [i.e., not based on greater knowledge and/or special expertise, but] based only on our role as teacher, we are both dangerously splitting ourselves--we are part master, but still part slave--and reinforcing, with our own power-based methods, the general power structure which oppresses us as women. (p. 33)

Challenging competitiveness among students and the illegitimate authority of teachers is of course more difficult to do in practice.

Even within university settings, it is possible to modify traditional social relations, for example, by encouraging more active student participation in shaping learning experiences, assigning group rather than individual projects, using small group discussion and sharing personal experiences, and creating a climate in which teachers can be challenged. Many teachers of women's studies (as well as more "humanistically" oriented faculty) who view feminist education as a vehicle for radical social transformation, have successfully experimented with such strategies (Howe & Ahlum, 1973; Rich, 1975; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971). However, it is also true that operating within the confines of the male dominated university structure, such experimentation is often difficult. Charges that women's studies is "only consciousness-raising" or academically "soft" can make it more difficult for women faculty to renounce more authoritarian roles or to encourage wider student participation in setting the terms of learning (Howe, 1977; White, 1971). While male academics may also risk charges of being "too easy" if they experiment with similar changes in their classrooms, women faculty start with being generally less respected and viewed as less legitimate models of authority. Women are, therefore, more vulnerable to charges of being "unprofessional" or "unrigorous" if they attempt to minimize their own authority as teachers.

Trying to change individual classroom practice in a direction contrary to that of the larger institution also has built-in frustrations. Students come in to all classrooms with a repertoire of behaviors, expectations and assumptions shaped by their many years of schooling. These do not easily change by participation in alternative structures three

hours a week. As most teachers who have tried it understand, modifying grading structures to limit their arbitrary power does not automatically change students' thinking that one "works for grades" and seeks reward above all for individual effort. Also, while teachers may try to modify their roles within individual classrooms, daily interactions with colleagues and administrators often pressure them to assume appropriately "authoritative" professional behaviors.

Girard's (1974) study of contemporary feminists' vision of a liberating education for women has found that in addition to changes in curriculum content, her subjects envisioned essential changes in the processes and interactions of the learning environment. She concluded that "It is essential to find new ways of structuring the environment so that noncompetitive modes of learning and opportunities for supporting and being supported by other women evolve" (Girard, 1974, p. 261).

Establishing the "authentic" authority as White (1971) calls for, i.e., that which acknowledges special skills and knowledge without awarding arbitrary power--in practice--is difficult in any setting. Even given women's generally less competitive orientation, fostering true collectivity and mutual support requires commitment and special effort. Theoretically, however, the elimination of those institutional structures and practices which encourage the development of hierarchical and competitive social relations of learning as well as women's reliance on and identification with primarily male authority would seem to be an important aspect of creating a liberating educational setting for women. By standing outside of mainstream institutions, alternative feminist educational programs attempt to do just that.

The Social Structure of Educational Institutions

At all levels of the educational system, women are concentrated in traditional female work roles, subject areas and academic programs and are found on the lower rungs of the pay, prestige and power hierarchies (Frazier & Sadker, 1973; Lockheed & Ekstrom, 1977). At the primary level, while women make up the overwhelming number of teachers, they represent less than one quarter of all principles. At the secondary level, males and females are more equally represented on faculty, though women are concentrated in the social sciences and humanities while men dominated in the sciences and math. However, most heads of departments and secondary school principals are men. In addition, women make up a relatively small percentage of local school board memberships and are even more severely under-represented as superintendents (Blanchard, 1977).

In higher education, the distribution of men and women among the faculty and administrators reflects more extreme patterns of unequal status and authority. In 1970, Harris (1974) summed the situation of women faculty stating, "In all kinds of institutions, women are distributed unevenly, clustered in the lower ranks in part-time positions and in institutions or programs considered by some to be low prestige" (p. 306).

By 1978, six years after the Department of Health, Education and Welfare set Affirmative Action guidelines for the hiring of women and minorities on faculty, the status of women is relatively unchanged (Bernay, 1978). Since 1960, the proportion of women faculty across all institutions has remained close to 24%, still lower than the figure

in 1930. Furthermore, the more prestigious the institution, the lower the percentage of female faculty. Where they are present, women are still clustered in the lower status, lower paying positions. Figures from the National Center for Educational Statistics show that of all full-time faculty positions in 1975-76, women comprised approximately 41% of Lecturers, 40% of Instructors, under 30% of Assistant Professors, 17% of Associate Professors, and under 10% of Full Professors. At each of these levels, men made considerably more money than women creating a mean salary difference among all ranks of approximately $3,000 (Crawford, 1978).

The pattern of women in administration is equally unbalanced reflecting "a conspicuous lack of participation" (Robinson, 1973). Reporting on a 1970 survey of women in administration, Robinson (1973) highlighted the two dominant trends in the data: (a) the higher the administrative position, the fewer the women, and (b) administrative units tend to be headed by men and staffed by women. Robinson (1973) reported that the rate of participation of women in administration barely reached half of that of women on faculties (p. 224).

In more recent work, Bernay (1978) reported on a survey by the American Council on Education of 2,500 accredited institutions of higher education which found that only 6% had women presidents; three-quarters of this 6% were at church-related colleges. Between 1972 and 1975-76, the number of female "chief executive officers" in four-year institutions declined from 162 to 148 (Kilson, 1976). Bernay (1978) also cited a study of administrators at 1,000 colleges and universities supported by the Ford Foundation which revealed that 79% of all were white males, 15%

white females, 5% minority males, and 2% minority females. Only the position of "affirmative action officer" had a sizable representation of women and minorities; but even here men were paid more than women (p. 88). Kilson (1976) has noted that given the declines in student enrollments and the restrictive economy, it is unlikely that women's status in higher education will be significantly altered. This is especially true for upper level administrative positions since these are largely recruited from the ranks of long-term, higher-status faculty where women are overwhelmingly under-represented.

Numerous single institutional reports and review studies conclude that there are consistent patterns of sex discrimination against women faculty on a variety of status dimensions (Astin, 1971; Astin & Bayer, 1973; Kane, 1976; Robinson, 1973). Robinson (1973) identified nine such variables including: institutional participation, departmental participation, initial appointment level, salary, rank, promotion tenure, and administrative activities. Astin and Bayer (1973) pointed out the importance of controlling for possible intervening variables in order to document more accurately the specific contribution of sex in the perpetuation of women's unequal status within the university. In their own analysis of the 1969 survey of teaching faculty sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and the American Council on Education, they calculated the contribution of sex in perpetuating inequality between male and female faculty with respect to rank, tenure and salary controlling for differences in personal and demographic characteristics, educational background, professional and work activities, and institutional setting. Their analysis concluded that these

intervening variables did account for a significant percentage of the inequalities; they also found that sex by itself was a major factor in discrimination. Astin and Bayer (1973) pointed out that their own estimate of the importance of sex was highly underestimated since many of the other variables which they controlled for were, in fact, sex-related themselves. They added that sex discrimination in academe does not begin when women are hired, but is a cumulative effect of early socialization into stereotyped sex roles and differential access to higher educational opportunities.

Even if specific sex discrimination in hiring and promotion was eliminated through affirmative action policy, many critics have argued the inequalities would not disappear since the very reward structure itself of higher education is biased towards those activities, interests and behaviors exhibited more by men than women and conforming more with masculine ideals (Astin & Bayer, 1973; Crawford, 1978; Graham, 1978; Hochschild, 1975; Howe, 1977; Rich, 1975).

It is not only as Howe (1977) acknowledged that the traditional academic reward structure does not recognize the value of feminist scholarship and teaching. Graham (1978) and others have argued that women faculty's activity, whether feminist or not, is undervalued within the dominant reward structure of the university. Graham (1978) suggested that this undervaluation has become exaggerated since World War II as the large research institution has come to dominate the organizational ideal within higher education. Higher education has become a central part of the knowledge industry drawn into the marketplace of government and corporate grants. Faculty promotion, tenure and prestige are

increasingly based on one's professional reputation earned through research, publication and administrative activities. Within such a framework, women faculty's typically greater involvement with and commitment to teaching, working with students and service to the institution are proportionately unrewarded.

Astin and Bayer (1973) raised concerns about the dysfunctional impact of a reward system which values research and productivity over teaching (p. 355). Hochschild (1975) and Rich (1975) have offered more explicitly feminist critiques of an academic career system molded on the masculine ideals of success and power which is both alienating to and oppressive to most women. Hochschild (1975) referred to the "clockwork" of the male academic career in terms of the intense competition for status and recognition (especially at "almost" elite schools) earned "against time." This career pattern, she continued, is tailored for the "family-free" man, i.e., the individual who has little or no responsibility for maintaining the daily fabric of social life outside the university. The culture of the academic career rewards "being the first" and getting the credit over getting the problem solved. Ideas become products and intellectual talk is "conspicuously consumed"; points are won by tearing down other people's work and one is continuously being judged. "If you bring someone out (as women are taught to do), instead of crowding him out, you get bad marks. Not to learn to talk this way at this place is like living without a skin; it is a required talk" (Hochschild, 1975, p. 64).

Women are at an overwhelming disadvantage within the male dominated academic career system on several grounds. On one hand, male success within the system has largely been based on the emotional and economic exploitation of large numbers of women who have been defined by their relationship to men in power. As Rich (1975) explained,

> The university is above all a hierarchy. At the top is a small cluster of highly paid and prestigious persons, chiefly men, whose careers entail the services of a very large base of ill-paid or unpaid persons, chiefly women: wives, research assistants, secretaries, teaching assistants, cleaning women, waitresses in the faculty club, lower-echelon administrators, and women students who can be used in various ways to gratify the ego. (p. 26)

Hochschild (1975) added that women faculty, whether single or married, have been placed in the position of competing "not simply with men, but with the heads of small branch industries," i.e., that series of "nameless women" and a few younger men who have provided the support and assistance on which male productivity is based (p. 67).

The fate of most women who have tried to operate within the academic system is depressing, if not tragic. As Roby (1972) concluded from her review of the women's history in higher education, women students and faculty members have been forced to either adopt "the competitive, egocentric, entrepreneurial, and stereotypically masculine culture and its norms" which have served the needs of the larger economy or to leave the institutions (p. 409). It is already commonplace to note that most women who have "made it" within the male defined academic system, especially before women's liberation, but still today learn to deny their connections with other women. Many avoid teaching and research on topics related to women for fear of being taken less

seriously by male colleagues (Crawford, 1978; Hochschild, 1975; Rich, 1975). As statistics on marital status and family life of female versus male faculty suggest, these women have more often had to forgo marriage and/or having children to avoid the conflicting demands of "family life" from which most married male academics are freed (Hochschild, 1975).

Those who accept the basic values and structures of American society and American universities but feel that women should have an "equal opportunity" to compete for the rewards and recognition approach the problem of women's subordinate position within higher education by demanding that more women achieve access to the higher status positions. It has been suggested that this strategy is shortsighted since it is not only the entry of women into higher status positions, but the total culture of the institution, i.e., the behaviors and characteristics which it values and rewards which maintains women's unequal position. Even if the academic reward structure were to value teaching the same as research and if more women were hired into higher rank positions, the fact remains that the university is fundamentally a hierarchical institution in which most women remain divided from each other, fragmented at different status levels in a way which replicates their position in the larger society. In this hierarchical structure, women seek success, legitimacy and opportunity through identification with more powerful men rather than with other women. The resulting competition fostered among women works against the recognition of their common problems and status (Kolodny, 1978; Rich, 1975; Webb, 1974).

As Kolodny (1978) has pointed out, divided by status differences, women in the university are left to function isolated from one another in an uncomfortable and "often hostile environment." Unable to see the mutuality of their positions, they are left to struggle alone.

> Women do not cross the barriers of age and status to organize because, overworked and isolated as they are, they do not see in the details of another's anguish the pattern of their own; they do not see that regardless of their title or economic situation, they all suffer repeated patterns of being under-represented, overworked and under-paid, and generally rendered either subservient and invisible altogether or else visible only as tokens and exceptions. (p. 23)

In summary, the feminist critique of the social structure of the university emphasizes the following critical issues. Institutions of higher education are fundamentally hierarchical organizations in which males have primary control over resources, policy and decision-making. Women are concentrated in the lower status and lower paying positions, and female academics are more highly represented in less prestigous institutions. Within the prestige and power hierarchy, women often find themselves isolated and divided from other women, placed in a position of seeking support, recognition and legitimacy through more powerful males. Women are not only disadvantaged because of their under-representation in the higher status positions, but as a result of the very culture of the academic career system which is molded on traditional masculine ideals of success and competition, and which encourages the emotional and economic exploitation of large numbers of women (and lower status men) as a requisite for success. Historically, women students and faculty have had to conform to male defined styles and priorities within the university to establish their legitimacy, or they have been forced to leave.

At this point in the review, it is important to give fuller attention to the movement of feminists "on campus" to challenge the male-biased curriculum and to modify traditional social relations of the classroom. Since the late 1960's, on four-year college and university and two-year college campuses, academic feminists have introduced "women's studies" courses into the curriculum. Increasingly, the array of individual courses have been coordinated into special programs, interdisciplinary certificates and majors, and in a small number of cases separate departments of women's studies. By 1976, there were over 270 programs on as many campuses and courses offered at some 1,500 institutions developed by 8,500 teachers (Howe, 1977).

In these courses and programs, feminist educators have: (a) "raised consciousness" about the male-centered curriculum, (b) supplemented the curriculum with courses which focus specifically on women, (c) developed interdisciplinary approaches to the study of women, (d) challenged the content, research focus and methods of the traditional disciplines, and (e) challenged some of the traditional divisions made between the intellectual and the personal, the academic and the political, the rational and the emotional (Howe, 1977; Howe & Ahlum, 1973; Showalter & Ohmann, 1971).

While Howe (1977) found increasing enrollments and expanding numbers of degree granting programs in her recent review of women's studies, the overall status of such programs is problematic. Though research and teaching on women has gained legitimacy in certain quarters on most campuses, women's studies is still considered by male faculty as unscholarly, marginal to the "real" curriculum, at best a passing "fad" (Allen,

1978; Kolodny, 1978; Rich, 1975). To counter these basically sexist and elitist attitudes, and to insure support for women's studies courses and programs, feminists within the university have often been pressured to prove the academic "rigor" of their courses and to tailor courses to fit into departmental curriculum. In many cases, women's studies advocates have been forced to make compromises which have weakened their overall control of programs and/or resulted in programs bearing little resemblance to the ones originally proposed (Kolodny, 1978; Salper, 1971).

Where there are women's studies programs, many suffer from lack of real control over their futures. Few have secure faculty positions or budget lines; and as a result, they are usually dependent on what individual faculty members in other departments are willing to and/or allowed to teach (Howe, 1977). Within the current period of retrenchment, faculty find it increasingly difficult to obtain release time to teach and/or work in women's studies programs. In spite of her overall optimistic evaluation, even Howe (1977) admitted that there is little evidence that the institutional reward structure is willing to recognize the contributions of feminist teaching and research. Due to this situation, as well as retrenchment, many junior faculty who have been crucial to the establishment of feminist courses and programs face slower advancement, if not prospects of the denial of tenure.

Howe and Ahlum (1973) warned that,

> The predominantly male faculty and administration has not looked with favor upon women's studies, nor will it, we believe, once it is clear that such studies may change people's lives, at least by altering their expectations and demands. We think that it is realistic to expect reluctance either to incorporate women's studies

> materials into "regular" courses. . . , as well as a diminishing willingness to allow the proliferation of separate women's studies courses. (p. 414)

Speaking from her experience in feminist arts programs in colleges and universities, Raven (1976) noted that when such programs present too great a threat to the values and relationships which dominate the university, they have been faced with ultimate rejection.

The difficulty women's studies programs face in terms of being "up front" about the political challenge to male dominance is that the academic mainstream still cherishes the ideal of "neutrality" and views any explicit political perspective as a contaminating and narrow bias. A perfect example of the (male) academic's challenge to the feminist perspective of women's studies programs is found in the attitude of one male member of the Faculty Senate Committee which recently evaluated the Women's Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. According to one of the program staff people, the faculty member insinuated that if women's studies would not consider hiring a person such as Phyllis Schlafly (leading national figure in the anti-ERA, anti-women's liberation movement) as a faculty member in order to "present all the perspectives" on women, the program harbored an "unscholarly bias." The choice of calling many programs "women's" studies rather than "feminist" studies reflects, in part, the pressure to maintain academic legitimacy by appearing "neutral".

Kolodny (1978) has suggested that the push for women's studies programs on college campuses as an attainable, pragmatic goal around which many women could rally has diverted feminists' attention and activism

away from the "structured institutional paradigms that had placed women in a subordinate position in the first place" (p. 24). A central aspect of that overall institutional framework is the fundamental hierarchical social structure in which male faculty and administrators occupy positions of power over women and have primary control over resources, policy and decision-making.

American history has demonstrated that the dominant institutions in the society can accommodate small increases in the number of individuals from "marginal" groups, e.g., women and minorities in more powerful positions without threatening the basic power relationships between the dominant and the oppressed. On the other hand, the creation of truly noncompetitive and non-hierarchical social relations within higher education poses a fundamental challenge to the larger institutional norms and requires a radical redistribution of power. As Hoffman (1977) wrote regarding women's studies programs, while many have succeeded in gaining approval for alternative governance structures, e.g., boards, councils or student/faculty committees, they must face a "constant tension" trying to implement collectivist, democratic principles within the university hierarchy (p. 55). Very few programs in the country have managed to maintain truly radical governance structures over time.

Advocates of feminist education within the universities are ultimately placed in a dependent position needing to seek approval from male department heads, faculty senates, deans, and other administrators. While women's studies programs may have a profound radicalizing impact on the students and faculty directly involved, their overall control and influence is circumscribed by the dominant male power structure. Freeman

and MacMillan (1976/77) argued that feminist organizations must have complete control over policy if they are to have the full freedom to build and strengthen the women's movement.

> No matter how supportive the relationships are that might exist within the women's studies department of a university, or at an abortion clinic, and no matter what the political goals of the individual women working there, such places cannot be considered feminist organizations unless those women control overall policy. (p. 74)

The energy required to challenge the highly bureaucratic, white male elite control over universities can be overwhelming. The desire to have control over the structure of power and status, over programmatic form, content and resources has been a central element motivating feminists to create autonomous educational programs outside the framework of established institutions.

Conclusion

The purpose of the review of the literature has been to provide a context for understanding the impulse behind the creation of alternative feminist educational programs outside the parameters of mainstream institutions. This has been done by reviewing four major areas of the feminist critique of the male-dominated educational system including: the changing ideology of women's education, the male-centered curriculum, the dominant social relations of learning, and the overall hierarchical social structure of educational institutions. The review has argued that concern for woman's autonomous development has rarely, if ever, been at the heart of the expansion of her educational opportunities.

Inside most educational institutions, the male-centered curriculum has relegated women's experience to marginal status in terms of what is "worthy" of knowing--denying women the opportunity to understand clearly the nature of their own experience and history. The message that "women are losers"--destined to remain secondary and subordinate to men--is learned through the total educational experience, including the hidden curriculum of textbooks, teacher attitudes and segregated activities; and is reflected ultimately in women's lower aspirations and educational achievement. Those who have made it into institutions of higher education have found themselves required to conform to male-defined standards of performance and academic legitimacy. They have been isolated from other women and in competition for male approval and sponsorship to achieve success. As teachers, students and workers, women have found themselves at the bottom of the prestige, power and reward hierarchies with little control over resources, policy, educational form, and content.

Each section in the review has tried to demonstrate how this analysis of women's experience in the male-dominated educational system has provided a context for feminists efforts to experiment with autonomous women's educational programs. The issues raised in the review will be returned to in Chapter V as part of a framework for assessing the extent to which the Maiden Rock Women's Learning Institute offers women a more liberating model of education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In Chapter II, four major areas of the feminist critique of the male-dominated educational system, particularly higher education, were reviewed as a framework for understanding the impulse behind feminist experiments with alternative educational programs for women. The second stage of the current research involved a case study of one such effort using the qualitative methodology of participant observation and unstructured interviewing. The purpose of Chapter III is to examine the methodological issues involved in the design of the case study. There are four main sections. The first section provides a general overview of the case study and participant observation and includes discussion of: (a) the rationale and philosophical underpinnings, (b) definition of terms and description of specific techniques for gathering data, (c) issues surrounding the researcher's role and objectivity, recording data, validity and generalizability. This discussion is drawn from a selected review of literature on qualitative methodology, and is developed as fully as it is since such field methods are only beginning to be more widely used and accepted in educational research practice. The section closes with some comments on the particular compatibility of the qualitative approach with the substantive focus of the research problem.

The second section discusses the specific design and procedures used in the case study of the Maiden Rock Women's Learning Institute.

This section is divided into two parts: the first dealing with site selection and initial entry, and the second with data collection. The third major section addresses other methodological concerns with regard to the specific case study including the role of the researcher and the quality of data. Finally, the last section describes the approach to the analysis of data in Chapter IV.

The Case Study and Participant Observation: An Overview

The rationale for the use of case studies in educational research as a preferred method for providing a natural basis for generalization is effectively presented in a recent paper by Stake (1977). Stake contrasted the case study approach to the dominant trend in social science research based in the positivist tradition (also referred to in Chapter II) which developed from the social theories of Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The positivist orientation rejects the study of the particular because it is viewed as idiosyncratic, and therefore assumed to be limited. Alternatively, this tradition has valued the pursuit of rationalistic, law-like generalizations or explanation through the use of quantitative "objective" measures believed to result in a higher order of knowledge. Positivists have searched for "facts" and "causes" which are seen as external and coercive influences on human behavior, and have employed methods which lend themselves to statistically defined relationships between variables (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 2).

Arguing against this formidable tradition, Stake has called for a more humanistic ideal of knowledge developing through "perceptions and understanding that come from immersion in the wholistic [sic] regard for particular phenomena" (p. 4). Such full, thorough analysis of the particular case can lead to a form of what he called "naturalistic generalization."

> Naturalistic generalizations develop within a person as a product of experience. They derive from the tactic knowledge of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how these things are likely to be later on in other places with which this person is familiar. They seldom take the form of predictions, but lead regularly to expectation. (Stake, 1977, p. 6)

Research which uses methods and presents findings in ways which most approximate the natural experiences of ordinary personal involvement can, Stake continued, best facilitate the development of "naturalistic" understanding.

Stake's notion of naturalistic knowledge and generalization finds more in common with the methods commonly referred to as qualitative, phenomenological or ethnographic research which have been traditionally used in the case studies of anthropological research. These studies have relied heavily on the method of participant observation. As Bruyn (1966) noted, qualitative methods became popular within American sociology in the studies of the "Chicago school" in the 1920's and 1930's, particularly within the community studies such as the Lynds' Middletown, Warner's Yankee City, and later William Whyte's Street Corner Society. During these years, a major debate flourished within sociology over the merits of case studies versus statistical analyses and over the issue of "subjective interpretation." This concept, articulated by Zniecki

and Weber, refers to the importance of scientists entering into the lives of the people they study to develop personal understanding of their position (Bruyn, 1966, pp. 6-13). Within mainstream sociology, after the 1930's case studies became viewed as less rigorous scientifically, and quantitative positivist methods came to dominate the research paradigm.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) have noted the reemergence of the use of qualitative methods in social research in the 1960's and 1970's and Wilson (1977) has reviewed the growing use of ethnographic methods by educational researchers interested in evaluation, in processes of innovation and general studies of schools. Cicourel (1975) also reported on the growing use of field methods in the study of the dynamics of educational organizations, emphasizing the advantages of gathering information based on direct involvement in the everyday life of students, teachers and administrators (p. 21).

Philosophical roots of ethnographic methods.

Wilson (1977) has identified two broad principles of human behavior which provide the rationale for the use of ethnographic methods, specifically participant observation: (a) the naturalistic-ecological hypothesis and (b) the qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis. Deriving from research and theory in ecological psychology, social psychology and the sociology of organizations, the first makes the basic assumption that human behavior is fundamentally shaped by the setting in which it occurs. In order, therefore, to generalize research results to events in the

everyday world, researchers must take into account the influence of the natural settings of whatever behaviors they are studying. The implication of this perspective for research design is to develop methods which allow observation of the phenomenon within the natural context.

The second principle, the qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis, extends the rationale for participant observation and suggests further implications for research methods. Rooted in the phenomenological tradition in the social sciences, the hypothesis asserts that human behavior cannot be understood without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions. This perspective challenges the traditional value placed on the distant and "objective" researcher. On the contrary, it requires that the researcher engage directly with her subjects, sharing in their life activities and sentiments in order to comprehend more fully the "meanings" of events and behaviors as understood by them directly.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) identified two major currents within the phenomenological approach in sociology: symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. According to the former, people are constantly defining and interpreting meaning within different situations. Through these subjective interpretations situations have meaning, and from these meanings all action develops. Different individuals define situations differently based on their past experiences and their current position in relation to the situation. Following from this perspective, to understand organizations, it is necessary to understand the ways in which individuals interpret situations (which may not be obvious from given social roles, stated norms, values and goals).

Ethnomethodologists take the question of "meaning" one step beyond by asking how it is that people come to define and interpret situations. Common assumptions are considered problematic and ambiguous, and the task of research is to discover how it is that people create meanings in different settings. While they differ in their particular emphasis, both perspectives assume that researchers must engage directly with their subjects, sharing in their life activities and sentiments in order to comprehend fully the meanings attached to events and behaviors as understood by the actors themselves.

Participant observation: defining the terms.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) have defined qualitative methods as,

> Research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior. . . [directed] at settings and the individuals within those settings holistically; that is, the subject of the study. . . is not reduced to an isolated variable or to an hypothesis, but is viewed instead as part of a whole. (p. 4)

One of the primary methods of qualitative research is "participant observation," defined as, "Research characterized by a period of intense interaction between the researcher and the subjects in the milieu of the latter [in which] data are unobtrusively and systematically collected" (p. 5).

Zelditch (1969) discussed "participant observation" along with "informant interviewing" and "enumerations and samples" as the three broad classes of methods used within field studies. Used in a restricted way, participant observation refers only to direct observation and participation

of the field worker within a context of ongoing social relations but includes interviewing participants during events as they occur. In contrast, Zelditch used informant interviewing to refer to that questioning of individuals who report information about others rather than about themselves and about past events. Finally, enumerations and samples include surveys and direct, repeated, countable observations of which the latter may involve minimal participation. Zelditch has emphasized that field studies generally involve combinations of these methods used to gather different kinds of information.

McCall and Simmons (1969) have used a broader definition of participant observation comparable to that applied to "field work" by Zelditch (1969). They have emphasized that participant observation is a research style or strategy,

> Which makes use of a number of methods and techniques--observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing and participation. . . . [It is] intentionally unstructured in its research design so as to maximize discovery and description rather than systematic theory testing. (Preface)

According to McCall and Simmons, "respondent interviewing" refers to those situations in which the researcher is most interested in the perceptions, motivations and meanings of the subjects regardless of the factual correctness of the report. What is of concern here are the individual's subjective interpretations. Examples from the present study would be a conversation with a Collective member regarding her feelings about an incident which occurred at a meeting or a conversation with a workshop participant on her reasons for taking the course.

In "informant interviewing" on the other hand, the truthfulness of the interviewee's account is very important. In these cases, the researcher accepts the report as a substitute for her own observations. This use of the term informant interviewing is similar to Zelditch's (1969) usage. An example of informant interviewing in the current study would be talking with a Collective member about the program's procedure for selecting workshop facilitators. What is looked for is not personal interpretation or motivation, but a description of the program's normative practice. Respondents and informants are sometimes represented by distinct individuals; however, they can also refer to the same individual on different occasions.

Another primary method for gathering data which shares certain similarities with interviewing is the analysis of documents, i.e., the collection of information from the various records and documents relevant to the organization under study which record information not available through direct observation or participation (McCall & Simmons, 1969; Zelditch, 1969). Angell and Freedman (1953) cited two advantages of using documents and records. On one hand, the researcher can often get a "feel" for the data at early stages of investigation which can produce hunches about the best way to think about the data. These sources also have the advantage of presenting information which is meaningful to the subjects themselves without being shaped by the researcher's own preconceptions. Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest (1966) have termed such data "unobtrusive" in that it is less reactive than data which comes from direct interaction with human subjects.

Certain documents can be used as informants to establish facts about events which are not directly accessible to the researcher. Sometimes such documents can be more precise than actual informants. On the other hand, documents, too, can be affected by selective perception and/or recording and this must be taken into account. For example, while minutes from organizational meetings may accurately record topics discussed, decisions made and events which have occurred, they most often are not complete transcripts and can, therefore, be influenced by the selective attention and interpretations of a note-taker.

Other documents are clear reflections of personal attitudes, values and interests such as diaries, letters, memos, and life histories; and these can be considered comparable to respondent interviews. One of the major drawbacks of such written data sources, however, is that they cannot be questioned or pushed into further responding in the way that interviewees can be (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 63). Used in conjunction with the other methods of participant observation, however, the analysis of documents can be an important method for gathering information not otherwise available.

Dean, Eichhorn and Dean (1969) elaborated on the implications of the unstructured nature of field methods and the emphasis on "discovery" for the specific techniques and procedures used to collect information. On one hand, observation and interviewing are marked by a degree of non-standardization. What is asked, of whom, and how, as well as "who" and "what" are observed are determined in an ongoing way by the emerging data.

> Changes in the research direction are made in order to chase down more critical data for the emerging hypothesis. Informants are not treated uniformly, but are interviewed about the things they can illuminate most. Each field situation is exploited to yield the most helpful data without unduly worrying about their comparability for statistical purposes. (Dean, Eichhorn & Dean, 1969, p. 20)

Secondly, the uncovering of information is highly dependent on the nature of the relationships the researcher establishes with informants in the field. In order to participate in a variety of settings and to have the opportunity to elicit spontaneous responses, the researcher must establish enough trust among informants to be made privy to significant information. Depending on the kind of organization researched, this confidence becomes more or less critical to obtaining the desired information.

The researcher's role and objectivity.

One of the most controversial dimensions of field research and the one which most differentiates it from quantitative methods is the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the subjects. Quantitative methods maintain the ideal of a "value-free" researcher who remains distant from the data in order to preserve scientific objectivity. The use of strict controls, isolating and manipulating variables, sampling and quantification of data through complex statistical analysis are designed to eliminate as much as possible any influence or subjective interpretation of the researcher (Bruyn, 1966).

In contrast, participant observation insists that the researcher get "close to the data" for the purpose of subjectively comprehending

fully the meaning of events and behaviors as understood by the subjects themselves. As Vidich (1955) stated,

> Participant observation enables the research worker to secure his data within the mediums, symbols and experiential worlds which have meaning to his respondents. Its intent is to prevent imposing alien meanings upon the actions of the subjects. (p. 354)

In order to avoid imposing meanings and categories on subjects, the researcher uses methods which allow her to understand the perspectives of the actors themselves, engaging in the life activities and sentiments of the people in face to face relationships and establishing oneself as a normal part of the culture and the life of the people under observation (Bruyn, 1966). The central task facing the field worker is to emerse herself sufficiently to develop understanding of the respondents' meanings while at the same time maintaining enough distance to avoid assuming those meanings as her own. What anthropologists have called the problem of "going native" results from emerging oneself so fully and engaging so authentically within the field that the researcher loses the ability to objectify her own experience. Vidich's (1955) notion of "social marginality" and Wilson's (1977) concept of "disciplined subjectivity" refer to the ways in which researchers must counterbalance their involvement in participants' perspectives. By systematically noting the perspectives of various subjects, regularly monitoring and testing out their own reactions and continuing to view actions from the perspective of the outsider, they argue, researchers can avoid abandoning themselves to the subjectivity of the participants.

Gold (1958) discussed the advantages and limitations of four theoretically possible roles for field workers to assume which vary in terms of the degree of openness, involvement and distance between the researcher and the subject. He evaluated each role in terms of the potential for balancing the engaged aspect of the "participant" and the "objective" stance of the "observer".

Complete participant. In this role, the true identity and purpose of the researcher is unknown to the informants. "Role pretense" is the overriding theme in interactions since the researcher is required to take on the role(s) she plays as though they were real. The greatest advantage of such a role is the possibility of gaining access to knowledge which might otherwise be out of bounds for the field observer. The greatest disadvantage revolves around the tension between sustaining the distinctions between the self and the role for losing the distance which allows perspective in observations.

Participant as observer. In this case, there is mutual awareness of the observer's role. There is no "undercover" identity and the field worker functions in a natural capacity. Gold has noted the potential problem of establishing more intimate contacts with subjects which develop independent dynamics outside of the research context. A second danger is the possibility of spending more time participating than observing.

Observer as participant. Here the demand is for more formal observation than either informal observation or participation. This role is typically assumed in one visit interviews. The advantage to this role is that it avoids the risks of over-involvement; at the same time, it

suffers the possibility of missing out on meaning because of the more limited contact between the researcher and subjects.

Complete observer. The field worker in this instance is entirely removed from informants, totally outside of the field of interaction. In such cases, the subjects are completely unaware of the researcher's presence, and therein lies the advantage of avoiding any effect of the researcher's presence on behavior. The great drawback to this role is the great distance between observer and subject which eliminates the possibility of testing out observations and clarifying perceptions.

While the four roles are analytically distinct, they are often assumed at different points within any particular study. The complete observer is the most limited role and the one least likely to be dominant within any study. Most of the literature on participant observation assumes more ongoing direct engagement between the researcher and the subjects. In the present study, the dominant roles employed are the participant as observer and the observer as participant.

In summary, some of the major distinctions in the theoretical assumptions and in research design between qualitative, participant observation and quantitative or experimental methodology are outlined in Table

Table 1

Major Distinctions Between Qualitative Participant Observation and Quantitative Methodology

Qualitative: Participant Observation	Quantitative/Experimental
1. Purpose is to develop "understanding" of the values, meanings and interpretations of human behavior from the subjects' own framework.	1. Purpose is to create abstract categories of meanings and classify subjects' responses accordingly.
2. Recognizes the importance of context in shaping subjects' meanings and behavior.	2. Attempts to eliminate context by isolating variables.
3. Emphasizes descriptive analysis.	3. Aims for quantitative, statistically relevant relationships.
4. Reflects a "research strategy" involving various methods used to elicit different information.	4. Refers to specific methods, e.g., experimental design, surveys, interviews.
5. Employs flexible, unstructured research design which emerges with developing data.	5. Uses highly structured methods designed to control and to manipulate isolated variables.
6. Requires the researcher to engage in genuine social interaction with subjects over time in order to "get close to the data."	6. Requires the researcher to remain distant from the subjects to avoid "contamination" and retain "value-free" objectivity.

Recording data.

The literature on field methods emphasizes the importance of the researcher maintaining complete, accurate and detailed notes for systematic and analytical participant observation (Bogdan, 1966; McCall & Simmons, 1969). Strauss (1969) has acknowledged that the researcher is likely to feel overwhelmed by the quantity of data in the field, but he has strongly advised against overlooking detail which at first may appear unimportant. Because of the emergent nature of analysis in participant observation, the researcher cannot know fully in advance what information will be most critical in the final analysis. Full details regarding the nature of interactions, descriptions of actors, behavior and reactions of the researcher, nonverbal aspects of communication and information about settings are all potentially important.

Both Bogdan and Taylor (1966) and Strauss (1969) have strongly advocated recording most data from observation and interviewing outside of the specific field setting without the use of mechanical devices, e.g., tape recorders, video, photocopying. While recognizing the potential accuracy gained by verbatim recording on the spot, their overriding concern is to minimize as much as possible the effect of the researcher's presence on the subjects' responses. Tape recording and/or note-taking may make subjects overly conscious of the researcher's intentions and reminds them that they are being watched. Strauss (1969) raised two additional drawbacks to recording on the spot. One is that the researcher may miss important nonverbal cues in the setting, particularly if note-taking falls behind. Secondly, in the characteristic unstructured

interviewing of participant observation, the researcher must constantly be processing and evaluating the information which is being gathered in order to guide further questions and responses. If the researcher's attention is continually diverted from the subject to the recording process, the synthesizing process may be hampered. As Strauss (1969) concluded, "A good observation or interview recorded with less than perfect accuracy is generally preferable to a mediocre interview with very high quality recording" (p. 73).

Bogdan and Taylor (1966) also argued that, in fact, the researcher can train herself to become a more accurate observer with practice. They have suggested several techniques to assist the researcher in accurate recording of information outside the field. Leaving the field situation temporarily, e.g., to a car or a bathroom, in extended sessions to jot down important phrases and recording notes as soon as possible after leaving the field are just two examples.

There are several exceptions to the rule of recording data outside the field. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) have argued that notes may be taken without negative effect in settings where other individuals are also taking notes, such as in a classroom or at a lecture. Even in those settings, however, they advised discretion. Strauss (1966) has reserved the use of mechanical recording to those situations in which large amounts of important and complicated information are present. This exception complements Bogdan and Taylor's (1975) allowance for the use of note-taking in cases of unstructured but formally arranged interviewing for collecting what they label "personal documents," i.e., "an individual's

descriptive, first person account of the whole or a part of his or her life or an individual's reflection on a specific event or topic" (p. 96). Taping is, in fact, preferred under such circumstances for several reasons. In contrast to the data of participant observation, interviews consist almost entirely of words, many of which would be lost without electronic recording. In addition, the interview is already a more artificial setting since the subject is not going about her or his everyday activities in their usual settings.

Validity.

Most of the criticisms of qualitative research and challenges to the validity of data focus on the impact of the researcher's presence on the data (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; McCall, 1969; Schwartz & Schwartz, 1969). These criticisms can be summarized in the following three charges:

1. Data is biased since it is filtered through the eyes of the researcher who selectively collects and interprets the information.

2. Data is unrepresentative since it is "reactive" and must be distorted by the researcher's presence in the field of interaction.

3. Data is limited due to the inability of the participant observer to be in all places at all times.

In response to these criticisms, it is important to note that all research is affected by the perspectives and biases of the researcher, although this fact is generally overlooked within quantitative research which claims to be "value-free" and "objective". It is also true,as

Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest (1966) have pointed out, that most research procedures are "obstructive" in the sense of affecting subjects' behavior in uncertain ways. The above criticisms must then be seen as applying to quantitative as well as qualitative research. This is not to dismiss the importance of these reservations, but to make clear that they apply to most forms of research. The advantage of participant observation over other methods, however, is that in this method, the researcher is explicitly conscious of the subjective involvement called for in the field and can, therefore, be more self-conscious about minimizing the various sources of "contamination".

To guard against the potential distortions described in the second criticism above, researchers are urged to maintain a critical perspective on their own role within the field, i.e., viewing themselves as they do other participants in the situation and taking into account their influence on other subjects. According to Vidich (1955),

> To the extent that a participant observer can participate and still retain a measure of noninvolvement, his technique provides a basis for an approach to the problem of validity. . . . The participant observer must be skeptical of himself in all data-gathering situations; he must objectify himself in relation to his respondents and the passing present. This process of self-objectification leads to his further alienation from the society he studies. Between this alienation and attempts at objective evaluation lies an approach to the problem of validity. (p. 360)

Bruyn (1966) defined validity as the extent to which the researcher's conclusions reflect the original meanings of the subjects' intentions, i.e., that "what the researcher says is reality in the minds of those he studies must be reality in the same way that they conceive it" (p. 255). Given the different philosophical assumptions regarding ways

of knowing associated with qualitative research methods, the same criteria for validity found within the traditional empirical tradition cannot be directly applied to participant observation.

Bruyn (1966) centered the discussion of validity around the problem of "subjective adequacy," i.e., "the extent to which the social analyst interprets accurately the meanings contained in the culture of the people he studies" (p. 178). Bruyn also emphasized the importance of consensus in judging the adequacy of social meanings (as opposed to theory or facts). He outlined six indices which are most relevant to the assessment of adequate interpretation: time, place, circumstances, language, intimacy, and consensus. To summarize briefly, the more time spent in the field, the closer to the people geographically, the more varied the circumstances and activities for gathering data, the more familiar with the language, the greater the degree of intimacy, and the greater the degree of consensus surrounding expressive meanings--the more accurate will be the researcher's interpretations of the social meanings of the group under study (Bruyn, 1966, pp. 180-185). While other factors such as size of the population studied, the scope of the research problem and the depth and breadth of particular meanings to be studied will also affect the adequacy of interpretation, Bruyn isolated the above variables as the particularly relevant major factors affecting any participant observation study.

McCall's (1969) discussion of validity centers primarily around the question of consistency of the data. He has made clear that the quality of data must be checked in an ongoing way throughout the period of

data collection. McCall outlined two primary checks which the researcher can use to evaluate the data collected. First, one must question the plausibility of any given piece of information; secondly, one must check out its consistency with other sources. The researcher must, therefore, use multiple indicators of any particular fact or meaning and must follow up on any sources of discrepancy to insure that interpretations are accurate and to account for variations in meanings.

While there is no sure way of guaranteeing the validity of any participant observer study, the above indeces can be viewed as guidelines for assessing the accuracy of research interpretations. Because the participant observer enters directly into complex social interactions, qualitative researchers must be aware of the potential distortions produced in their methods. These methods, however, are the very techniques which allow for more holistic and "naturalistic" understanding and generalization in qualitative research.

Generalizability.

A second criteria applied to the quality of data is the generalizability of research findings. To what extent do the results apply to other groups in other settings under different circumstances? Generalizability is sometimes referred to as "external validity." In experimental and quantitative research, representativeness of the studied sample and the similarity of experimental conditions are two central concerns (Bracht & Glass, 1968).

Participant observation and case studies in principle focus attention on the particular rather than seeking out "representative samples." However, the question of the meaningfulness of the study of the particular in understanding the more general is still important. On one hand, as Bogdan and Taylor (1966) have argued, "All settings and subjects are similar while retaining their uniqueness" (p. 12). Participant observation seeks to study certain social processes in an environment which is most likely to manifest those processes.

Eisner (1975) has approached generalizability from a different perspective in his discussion of educational evaluation. He has criticized those who would try to discover scientific methods that can be universally applied to all classrooms and to all individuals with, for example, certain personality or social class backgrounds. Educational practice is too complicated to come up with such formulas and the purpose of evaluation should be to enhance the ability of teachers and others to see more clearly and critically their own educational practice. From Eisner's perspective, the generalizability of evaluation should be seen as the ability to learn from the particular case what might be useful to look at in other educational settings. According to Eisner, "What one learns from effective criticism is both a content within a particular classroom and a refined sensibility concerning classrooms that is useful for studying other educational situations" (p. 19).

Feminist education, the case study
and the use of participant observation.

The following section discusses the particular appropriateness and usefulness of the case study and participant observation as a methodology for studying the phenomenon of alternative feminist education. The arguments are organized around three central issues:

1. The local and emergent character of the phenomenon under study;

2. The feminist model of analysis rooted in consciousness-raising formats which moves from the concrete to the general; and

3. The feminist critique of the methods and assumptions of the male dominated academic disciplines.

Many commentators have noted the richness and diversity which have characterized the women's movement as a result of its highly decentralized and local development (Carden, 1974; Freeman, 1975). Such a structure has encouraged feminists to create forms which are responsive to local conditions and needs, and has facilitated the participation of many women in the development of feminist analysis and new organizational forms. The case study provides a useful method for examining the particular characteristics and local conditions affecting the development of one alternative feminist educational program.

The case study method also parallels the feminist model of analysis which developed from the prototypic feminist form, the consciousness-raising group. In such groups, the study of the immediate, concrete and daily experiences of individual women's lives provides a basis for developing more general understanding of the broader forces and conditions

which shape those lives. In a similar fashion, the present study involves a concrete analysis of the everyday experience of women involved in one particular alternative feminist educational program as a way to develop a more general understanding of feminist education.

Alternative feminist educational programs are "natural" experiments in the creation of new models of teaching and learning and new forms of social organization based on feminist analyses of women's oppression. There is no single definition or theory of feminist education, and there is little explicit research in the area. Feminist education is being defined through concrete practice, from the "ground up," in university women's studies programs and alternative educational projects. As a research methodology, participant observation is based on a respect for the meanings and values attached to the daily interactions and events experienced by participants themselves. Such a methodology seems particularly appropriate for the study of a phenomenon which is based on the fundamental principle of the importance of women defining the nature of their social reality for themselves.

As a research methodology, participant observation has the potential to overcome the sharp dichotomies between "fact" and "meaning", "subject" and "object", "subjectivity" and "objectivity" which characterize the dominant paradigm within educational and social science research. As noted in Chapter II, these dichotomies--also reflected in the opposition of feelings, emotions and subjectivity with intellect, reason and objectivity--are associated respectively with the "feminine" and the "masculine" and unequally valued. As the review also pointed out, the

same positivist tradition which emphasizes "value-free" research and "objective" law-like generalizations as the highest order of knowledge (Stake, 1977) has masked the development of methods and standards of knowledge which have denied women the tools to understand their own experience.

All of this is not to say that the study of alternative feminist education could not be studied by any other method or approach besides the one used in the present study. For example, a survey of all (or a sample of) alternative feminist educational programs across the country based on quantitative analysis of results could be a very useful and enlightening. However, in terms of developing a fuller understanding of the meaning of feminist education to those directly involved with its development, such a study would have clear limitations. Through the use of participant observation, the present research attempts to develop a more holistic, richly textured understanding of the phenomenon.

Study Design and Procedure

The following section includes a description of the specific design and methods used in the development of the case study of the Maiden Rock alternative feminist educational program. First, the process of selecting a site and gaining entry is examined; then the actual collection of data in the field.

Site selection and initial entry.

In the summer of 1977, a preliminary survey (see Appendix A) was sent to 13 alternative feminist education programs, primarily independent ones, identified through either two major national feminist resource listings edited by Rennie and Grimstad--the New Woman's Survival Catalog (1973) and the New Woman Survival Sourcebook (1975)--or personal contacts. The survey was sent to gather basic information on the current status of the programs and included questions on goals, organizational structure, curriculum, participants, funding, affiliations, and future projections. The survey was also used to determine if the program would consider participating in the second more in-depth stage of the study. All of the programs shared the common characteristics of: (a) being run by and for women, (b) being non-degree programs with "open" admission, (c) defining their goals in terms of both personal growth and social change clearly identified with the feminist movement, and (d) emphasizing the creation of alternatives to male-dominated educational structures.

From the responses to the survey, three programs were identified for possible follow-up. One was affiliated with a women's center in a large New England university. The other two were independent, community-based programs, one in the Boston area and the other, the Maiden Rock program in Minneapolis. Each of the programs was identified on the basis of the coherence of their statement of goals and structure as reflected in the survey, their general accessibility and willingness to consider further participation.

The decision to focus the study on the Maiden Rock program was based on a process of elimination as well as the active interest expressed by the Midwest organization. The university-based program had decided to discontinue its programming (as a result of faltering enrollments) until an evaluation had been completed over the following six to eight-month period. Contacts with the New England community-based program were initially positive, but proved ultimately unrewarding. Basically, the program coordinators were reluctant to have an "outsider" conduct independent research on the organization, and they were unwilling to commit the resources to collaboratively shape the study. In marked contrast, the Maiden Rock coordinating collective was enthusiastic about participating, having indicated active interest from its initial response to the preliminary questionnaire.

Gatekeepers. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) referred to those people who have the power to grant access to an organizational setting as the "gatekeepers" (p. 31). Initial contacts with Maiden Rock were made by mail and by phone through one of the members of the program's coordinating Collective. This woman expressed strong personal interest in the research proposal, but indicated that final authority to agree to participate in the second more in-depth stage rested with the full Collective. She, however, took responsibility for presenting the proposal to the rest of the group. In a subsequent phone call, I was told that the Collective was interested in participating and that they were willing to have me attend any and all regularly scheduled meetings and events. They also indicated their willingness to spend time with me on an individual basis for interviews.

While the basic agreement to participate in the study was settled long distance, by phone, the "critical" period in establishing contact with the program occurred during the first face to face interaction with the entire Collective at one of the regularly scheduled meetings. At that time, I reviewed briefly the background of the study, the broad areas of investigation as well as interest in the Maiden Rock program, specifically. Aware that many feminist and other political and alternative organizations are suspicious of outside academics "building careers" doing "disinterested" research on such groups and in light of the experience with the New England community school, I also made it clear that the research was motivated by my personal feminist political commitments as well as more academic concerns. In general, my approach was to be direct and honest with the program in order to gain their trust and cooperation. I presented myself as an active feminist having both personal and political interests in the research which went beyond academic concerns.

This meeting was "critical" because it set the tone for my relationship with the Collective which carried over for the duration of the research period. Discussions which developed around two issues raised by Collective members were particularly important in reinforcing the receptivity which the program had originally demonstrated. One of these issues had to do with the availability of the results of the study. Several women indicated their concern that the findings be made accessible to other feminists who were actively engaged in the struggle of creating alternative programs rather than left on "dusty university library shelves." In response to their concerns, I shared my intentions

of trying to publish material on the program through feminist publications for the purpose of making the results accessible. In addition, the possibility was mentioned of writing an article on the program for an anthology on feminist education, then being edited by a nationally-known feminist. The group was particularly excited by this prospect of gaining publicity for the program.

The second major issue raised about the research centered on the lesbian identity of many of the women involved with the program. The question was posed as to whether I would have any "personal or academic" difficulties dealing with this in the research, e.g., Would this become a problem in terms of the legitimacy of the study? Would I have to "prove" the mental stability of the women? The last comment was made jokingly, but reflected a serious concern about how I would handle the lesbian issue. It was clear that all the Collective members were listening closely to the response.

I indicated that I had assumed at least some lesbians were involved in the program based on my reading of the program literature and the response to the preliminary questionnaire which they had returned. While adding that I personally did not identify myself as a lesbian, I shared that I had been involved in various feminist settings in which lesbian issues were addressed; that I did not feel uncomfortable. If the issue was central to the functioning of the program, I would address it directly and did not foresee any difficulties. (In fact, the issue is discussed further in Section 1 of the Analysis of Data in Chapter IV.)

Given the broader culture's perception of lesbians as "deviants", the Collective members' concern about the researcher's attitude towards the subject was understandable. At this point in time, it would be naive for any researcher interested in studying a feminist (if not explicitly lesbian) organization not to anticipate the possibility of having to confront similar issues at some point. Before entering the field, I had anticipated that the lesbian question would surface in terms of my contact with the Collective and was prepared to respond to questions. In fact, the Maiden Rock Collective is highly conscious and proud of the lesbian profile of the group; and a more ambiguous or tentative response on my part might easily have made them uncomfortable and reluctant to interact openly. On the contrary, comments made by several women indicated that they did feel comfortable and trusted that they would be represented with integrity. As one woman remarked, "I'm very pleased with [what you said]. I think it's very respecting of you, of us, the material and your committee."

In addition to the discussion of these substantive concerns, the first meeting was used to clarify other terms of the research project. It was agreed that I would attend all of the formally scheduled program activities and that I would be arranging individual interviews with the current Collective members as well as with other facilitators, program participants and former members of the Program Planning Group. I indicated that interviews would remain confidential, but also expressed my willingness to share general reactions and perceptions with the group so that they would have an idea about the direction of my thinking. I also indicated interest in assisting in whatever ways I could with Collective

work, though no formal participation was spelled out. In many ways, I assumed the status of a temporary member of the Collective but without the same level of responsibility for the program.

Comments made by the women at the end of the first meeting indicated that they felt at least initially comfortable and positive towards the research project. Individuals indicated they were "excited", "feeling good," "looking forward" to the ongoing contact. One of the strongest statements to this effect was made by one woman who said,

> I'm extremely glad that you're here. I've been very nervous because I very much wanted what it is that you can do. And it's important to me that I like the person who does it. Otherwise, I can't engage in any activity or trust the work. I have a very good sense of you. I'm very pleased.

Data collection.

During the period of the research, data was collected in an ongoing way using the various specific strategies of participant observation as outlined by McCall and Simmons (1974), i.e., (a) direct interaction with subjects over time, (b) observation of relevant events, (c) informal respondent and informant interviewing, and (d) the analysis of documents. In addition to the informal interviewing conducted within the context of natural settings, data was also gathered through more formally arranged and tape-recorded interviews with Collective members, former PPG members and workshop facilitators. More will be said about these interviews after the following description of the specific settings and circumstances in which data was gathered through those methods described above. Finally, the section on data collection will include a discussion of other

methodological concerns including the quality of data and role of the researcher.

Participant observation. The primary settings for collecting data through participant observation included: (a) the weekly Collective meetings, (b) specific educational events--one city-based weekend workshop and two sessions of the evening lecture series, (c) a specially scheduled "community forum" on the program, and (d) the many informal activities and social interactions which evolved during the course of the study. In addition to these natural settings, a wide variety of program documents and records were used for gathering data. A brief description of these different contexts follows.

Attendance at Collective meetings provided the most frequent and consistent contact with the program coordinators during the period of the research. Lasting two to three hours each, they were held in the evening at different member's homes and were the primary occasions for the group to conduct business, to discuss program development and planning, to share information, and to solidify group relationships. Participation in these meetings offered the chance to "subjectively" experience the organization as a temporary member and to observe organizational dynamics. Attendance at meetings was also an opportunity to observe the group's own definitions of central tasks, problems and concerns.

From the first meeting, I was incorporated into the Collective's process through participating in the ritual of "personal sharing" (this will be discussed more fully in Section 3 of Chapter IV) at the beginning

and end of the meeting. At first, this participation felt awkward, but very quickly came to seem natural. As the research progressed during the personal sharing, I took the opportunity to share general information with the Collective about the contacts I had made, interviews scheduled, etc. Outside of the sharing, I assumed a fairly passive role in the group, making few comments except for clarification. In later meetings, I contributed more actively, though still in a more limited way than the others.

Data was also collected at several specific educational programs sponsored during the research period. These included two evening sessions of the winter evening speaker's series and one city-based weekend workshop. (A second workshop originally planned was unfortunately cancelled as a result of inadequate registration.) Attendance at these events offered the chance to "experience" the curriculum and to observe interactions between and among participants and facilitators. These direct experiences added depth and texture to the accounts of the educational programs gathered through interviews and program literature. There were also occasions for collecting data about program participants. At the evening lectures, I was an anonymous participant; but at the weekend workshop, the research project was mentioned briefly.

One special event held during the research period was an open community forum on the Maiden Rock program scheduled at a local women's coffeehouse one evening. Four Collective members were present to respond to the questions, concerns and criticisms of area feminists (approximately 50 attended) about the program. This forum was part of

a series being held on various feminist/lesbian-feminist organizations in the Twin Cities.

In addition to the more formal occasions described above, many spontaneous and informal opportunities for gathering data emerged during the course of the study. A few examples of such settings include: (a) the pot luck dinners held before Collective meetings, (b) conversations with Collective meetings driving to and from meetings, (c) a day trip with a Collective member to the Maiden Rock farm, and (d) various social and cultural activities sponsored within the larger feminist/lesbian-feminist community.

Included in the general method of participant observation is the collection and analysis of documents. A wide variety of written and taped materials pertaining to the Maiden Rock program were used to provide additional sources of information. Particularly useful at the initial stages of the study were the minutes from Collective and PPG meetings from over a two-year period. These minutes were very helpful in reconstructing the history of the organization and in focusing lines of inquiry further. Other documents consulted included course brochures, publicity materials, tapes from selected former Collective meetings, samples of written and taped workshop evaluations, application forms for the first summer's program, and internal communications. All of these materials were made readily available by the Collective, often spontaneously offered for my perusal.

Formal interviewing. In addition to the respondent interviewing which formed an ongoing and integral part of the daily participant

observation, data was also collected from more formal interviews with Collective members, former PPG members and unaffiliated workshop facilitators. These interviews were distinct in that they were all prearranged and were more clearly structured in terms of interviewer-interviewee roles; with the individual's permission, they were also tape-recorded.

Each Collective member was individually interviewed during the second and third weeks of the study after contact had already been made at meetings. Because of the familiarity, there was no need for formal introduction except to give a brief sketch of the kinds of general questions I would be asking. The interviews were held in the individuals' homes or offices. The Collective women appeared generally curious about the interviews and seemed to enjoy the opportunity to share their personal thoughts, feelings and experiences on an individual basis.

In addition, all but two of the former Program Planning Group members and a small handful of unaffiliated workshop facilitators were also interviewed. These women were identified as the research progressed as their names began to surface in other contexts. Most were initially contacted by phone, told briefly about the research project and asked if they would be willing to meet to talk about their previous experience with the program. Without exception, all the women agreed, though there was initial hesitation on the part of some who seemed concerned to know more about my motives and intentions. Interestingly, I sensed greater hesitation on the part of some of these women who were being asked to share only an hour or so of their time than I had from my initial contact with the Collective about the total research proposal.

On reflection, this hesitation was not so surprising. First the women were being asked on the spot if they would agree to be interviewed. More significantly, perhaps, these women were no longer working with the program and obviously had other priorities. It also became clear during the subsequent interviews that some felt ambivalent about their experience with the program. It was also the case that I introduced myself as having been working with the Collective, and it is possible that some women were concerned about the anonymity of their responses. Again, all the women did agree to be interviewed, and most indicated that it was interesting for them to have the chance to talk over some of their experiences. Only one woman indicated that she felt slightly nervous about the interview because of the issues it brought up regarding her previous involvement with the program. In the case of some of the women formerly involved with Maiden Rock, the interview was the only contact which was made during the period of the research.

About the nature of the formal interviews, their format came closest to the kind of "focused" less structured type described by Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook (1976, pp. 318-320). According to Selltiz et al., influenced by anthropological field work and clinical interviewing, various types of unstructured interviews have developed "in which neither the exact questions the interviewer asks nor the responses the subject is permitted to make are predetermined" (p. 317). Unstructured interviews are most commonly used in cases where the research is focused on exploring a broad problem, a new area of study, examining how people conceptualize a topic and/or the kind of language they use to describe certain experiences, feelings, etc. Focused interviews are one model of

the less structured variety in which the intent is to direct the respondent's attention to a given experience (Selltiz, p. 317). Generally, the interviewer knows in advance the different aspects of the experience she wishes to have the respondent cover although there is no adherence to a predetermined set of questions.

Unstructured interviewing is distinguished from standardized or structured interviewing in which the goal is to collect the same or predominantly the same information from each respondent; in which answers are comparable and classifiable and differences in responses reflect actual differences rather than ones due to the way in which questions were asked (Richardson, Dohrenwend, Snell & Klein, 1965; Selltiz et al., 1976). According to Richardson et al., standardized interviews can be either "scheduled" or "unscheduled". In the former, the wording and sequence of questions is adhered to rigidly for all respondents on the assumption that such consistency is necessary to guarantee comparability. In non-scheduled formats, phrasing and sequence are more flexible on the assumption that different individuals may need to be approached somewhat differently in order to elicit similar responses. The variability here, however, is kept to a minimum; and still, essentially the same questions are asked of each respondent.

Richardson et al. have noted that frequently in research, a single interview may include a combination of the various types of interview formats (p. 55). This was true to some extent in the formal interviews in the present study. They are considered "focused", however, in the sense that they drew respondent's attention to their experiences as

program coordinators, facilitators, and/or workshop participants. Before arriving in Minneapolis, several broad areas for possible questioning, along with more specific questions, were outlined in terms of the three major dimensions of the case study described in Chapter I, i.e., (a) the development of an alternative feminist curriculum, (b) the development of an alternative organizational structure, and (c) the relationship between the development of the program and that of the broader feminist movement (see Appendix B). As the research progressed, however, questions were also shaped in response to the emerging observations, interactions and ongoing field analysis. As a result, some questions asked of all the respondents were similar, e.g., regarding their interests in working with the program, their perceptions of the distinctive aspects of the educational offerings, their experiences as facilitators and/or workshop participants. Other questions were more idiosyncratic, however, addressed to issues particularly relevant to the individual being interviewed. For example, one woman who left the PPG sent a letter of resignation to the Collective. Before interviewing her, I had read the letter and from that formulated some specific questions. As another example, several women interviewed had participated in other alternative feminist educational programs as students or teachers; they were asked to compare their Maiden Rock experiences with the others.

One final comment about the formal interviewing has to do with my role as interviewer. In any interview situation, the interviewer must decide how much to interact with the person being interviewed--whether to comment only for clarification and elaboration or to share more freely. I chose to be freer in the interviews approximating a more natural

conversation though clearly more structured. This style seemed to be useful. Many times after the person being interviewed offered an initial response to a question, I made a brief comment about related matetrial or offering an alternate view. Such comments usually led to a more elaborate response on the part of the other person oftentimes uncovering new areas of information and providing a more complete response. This style seemed to put interviewees more at ease, especially those for whom the interview was the first contact.

Recording data. During the study of the Maiden Rock program, data was recorded in a variety of ways. Collective meetings and formal interviews were tape-recorded after permission was requested, and occasionally notes were taken on these occasions in order to guide the review of the tapes and to make note of nonverbal cues, physical surroundings, etc. Outside of these specific occasions, data was recorded in extensive field notes completed outside of the natural settings in which interactions occurred. These notes detailed as much as possible the nature of verbal and nonverbal interactions, descriptions of individuals involved, the settings as well as my own reactions, interpretations, and behavior. (See Appendix C for a sample of field notes.)

One note should be made about the use of mechanical recording and note-taking in the field. As noted in the overview, these practices are generally avoided because of their intrusive nature. In the present case, however, it was felt that these techniques would not have particularly reactive effects. Pre-field-work contacts revealed that the Collective itself was in the habit of taping certain meetings and evaluation

sessions during workshops, and no reservations were expressed about tape recording for the research purposes.

In terms of taping the formal interviews, it was also previously noted that the general rule against tape recording is waived for those situations in which large amounts of important and complicated information is being conveyed. The focused interviews with Collective members, former PPG members and workshop facilitators were those kinds of situations, and as noted, they were recorded after permission was requested. Given the length of the interviews, even those individuals who appeared slightly self-conscious at the beginning became freer and more relaxed with their responses after a short time.

Methodological Concerns: The Quality of Data

The following section discusses several methodological concerns which bear on the evaluation of the quality of data and interpretations of the Maiden Rock case study. These are discussed in terms of: (a) validity, (b) the role of the researcher, and (c) the receptivity of the program.

Validity.

The bottom line in evaluating the quality of any educational research is whether or not the results and interpretations of the study can be trusted, i.e., are they valid. In field work, this concern is generally phrased in terms of two questions: (a) "Did the researcher

get 'the whole picture'?" and (b) "Is that picture free from distortion?" While there is no statistical proof of validity in participant observation, it is possible to assess the likelihood of the researcher having accurately captured and interpreted the meanings attached to the phenomena studied. The following discussion of the quality of data in the present study makes use of Bruyn's (1966) framework of six criteria for judging the "subjective adequacy" of interpretation. These include: (a) the time spent in the field, (b) geographical proximity to those studied, (c) familiarity with the language, (d) variation of circumstances for collecting data, (e) the degree of intimacy with subjects, and (f) the degree of consensus around social meanings.

The understanding of any group or organization is limited by the amount of time the researcher spends with those in the group. In the present study, data was collected during seven weeks in the field. This time period would be inadequate for conducting a study of a community of a large complex organization, or of a population very different from the researcher. In contrast, Maiden Rock is a relatively small and homogeneous organization, especially the Collective which was the primary data source. Furthermore, the initial receptivity of the program, the collective decision to participate and the access to immediate involvement with the Collective itself meant that much of the time often required by field workers to establish a natural role and to gain the confidence of subjects was shortened.

During the seven weeks with the Maiden Rock program, I was quickly integrated into the daily life of the Collective, e.g., attending

meetings and educational programs, interacting informally at pot lucks and other social occasions, talking in groups and with individuals. I have already mentioned my incorporation into the Collective's "personal sharing" from the first night's meeting which had the effect of drawing me into the group's normal process. There were also other indicators of Collective members' willingness to share information about themselves and the program.

From the first night of my arrival, I was invited by one woman to meet up with a friend of hers whom she described as a "long-time active feminist" in the area. She told me that her friend had some "different" perceptions of Maiden Rock which she was interested in having me hear. In terms of the whole Collective, an interaction at the first meeting reflected their interest in exposing me to as much of the program as possible. I was told that the group was planning a special "winter solstice" celebration the following evening to which I was invited. I indicated that unfortunately I would not be able to attend since I had made a previous arrangement to meet an old friend who was coming into the city to see me. Some of the women expressed obvious disappointment, and emphasized that they considered the celebration as part of the Maiden Rock activity. In fact, it felt somewhat awkward not to attend.

The solstice celebration was the only occasion in which I had an opportunity to participate but didn't; and I have already given examples of the wide variety of settings which did present themselves for gathering data on the program. According to Bruyn (1966), the importance of "variety of circumstance" in affecting the adequacy of interpretation

rests on the fact that: (a) different kinds of information may surface in different settings and (b) the life of a group or organization takes place in many places at different times.

It is important to acknowledge that the seven week limit did not permit direct participation and observation of change and/or stability within the organization over a significant period of time. Also, because of the intermittent scheduling of educational events, data gathering was restricted to a limited number of these occasions--none of which were scheduled overnight at the farm. Given these limitations, the analysis of data has relied more heavily on data from the formal interviews than it would have if the field period had been extended.

It is not only variety and quantity which affects the quality of data, but the degree of trust and intimacy which characterizes interactions between the researcher and the subjects in the field. That Collective members were trusting and willing to share openly with me was apparent in many ways. From the first meeting, I was overwhelmed by the quality of intimacy in the personal sharing which the women were willing to express barely knowing me. These feelings foreshadowed the sense of caring and trust which developed particularly with certain members of the Collective in the course of the research. One explicit confirmation of my perception that Collective members were open in their interactions with me was a comment made by one woman that my presence had not changed the usual "feel" of the Collective meetings. Other evidence included comments made at the end of the first Collective meeting already referred to in the discussion of "initial entry."

The importance of familiarity with the language and geographic proximity in establishing subjective adequacy is most obvious in studies of organizations, a community or subculture; and where the basic culture and idiom of the group studied is different from that of the researcher's due to either national, ethnic, race, or class differences. Even in studies where no such apparent differences exist, however, and sometimes particularly in those situations, the researcher must develop an understanding of the particular ways in which language is used and the specific meanings attached to commonly heard terms and phrases. In the present study, familiarity with basic terms, concepts and meanings of feminist analysis had a double edge. On one hand, this facilitated an understanding of much of the program's basic goals, philosophy and political orientation. At the same time, however, it was important not to assume too much, i.e., not to impose interpretations or meanings which might not, in fact, be those of the women associated with Maiden Rock. Beyond general feminist terminology, the Collective members in particular had developed special language, words and phrases which were repeatedly used in relation to the program, e.g., "intentionality", "feminist process," "learning from the inside-out." That these phrases had particular (if not also ambiguous) meanings to "insiders" was illustrated in the comment of one of the PPG members who had joined the Collective who stated, "It took me about six months to figure out what people meant by being 'intentional'." The issue of language and meanings is something the Collective is actually quite conscious of. In the past, Maiden Rock has been criticized (from both within the PPG and from the larger women's community) for using ambiguous "feminist-process-jargon" which was

thought to be confusing. A major part of the analysis in Chapter IV elaborates the meanings embedded in much of this language in terms of the program.

The role of the researcher.

As noted in the "overview" section, one of the major methodological issues in participant observation has to do with the role of the researcher in the field setting. One of the major tasks facing the researcher is to be able to engage subjectively in the life of the subjects without "going native," i.e., while maintaining the critical stance of the outsider who has the distance to be able to assume and understand the various perspectives of different participants. In practice, achieving this balance is sometimes difficult. One of the questions the researcher must answer is "how involved to get."

I have already indicated that my interest in the research on the Maiden Rock program was not as a distant academic but as a person directly concerned with the fate of alternative feminist projects. As such, my reactions to what I observed and heard were not always neutral. For example, as issues came up in discussions at Collective meetings, I became aware of "taking sides" internally, feeling greater sympathy for certain positions and proposals, e.g., regarding future programming or organizational decisions. On some occasions, I left Collective meetings feeling disturbed about the decisions made or dynamics I observed. Such internal reactions obviously shaped my own perceptions and interpretations of what was going on in the field. Even when the researcher does

not come into a field situation with clear attitudes towards the focus of study, such subjective responses often develop naturally as a result of direct engagement with the subjects.

One incident which occurred early on in the research project stands out as an example of a time when I felt concerned about over-involvement with the issues. The event was the informal meeting mentioned earlier arranged by one of the Collective members with her and her friend whom she wanted me to talk with about the program. At one point, the two women got into a debate about the implications of some of Maiden Rock's practices and policies. To my surprise, I found myself feeling defensive in response to the criticisms which the friend was making about the program. This defensiveness seemed to come from two places. One was that I had just been overwhelmed (the evening before) by the warm reception I'd received from the Collective, and I had been very taken with the women personally. In addition, however, I identified with some of Maiden Rock's policies in terms of my own experiences in feminist organizations. I found myself beginning to engage in an argument with the friend, but suddenly checked myself for fear that my reactions would prevent me from maintaining "objectivity".

These kinds of subjective responses are, in fact, unavoidable in participant observation if the researcher does truly "engage" with the subjects. Rather than invalidating the data, however, they can become important material for analysis if recorded self-consciously in field notes along with concrete descriptions of people, settings and interactions. (See Appendix C for the field notes from this occasion.) Such

personal reactions can be very important in terms of providing clues to significant issues. In the particular situation just described, the defensiveness I felt seemed to be experienced by the other Collective member, and provided a clue regarding the Collective's response to criticism about the program from certain sectors of the larger feminist community.

In the incident just described, it was relatively easy to "disengage" from the debate, given the limited real investment I had in the Maiden Rock program itself, particularly at that stage of the research. Had I, in fact, become more actively involved in assuming direct responsibility as a Collective member,over a longer period of time, however, such internal conflicts might have been exacerbated. Even within the relatively limited seven-week period, however, such conflicts surfaced.

Another methodological concern related to the researcher's influence on the data has to do with the possible distortion of the data resulting from the researcher's presence in the field of interaction. I have already highlighted some of the evidence which suggests that my presence did not, in fact, alter the "usual" group dynamics within the context of the Collective. However, there are certain ways in which my presence did have an impact on the program. One of these became apparent when one Collective member confided in me that she thought my presence had had an energizing influence on the group; that previous to my arrival, the Collective had been in a low energy period. While other factors may have contributed to the change which this woman described, what was significant was her perception of my influence on the group reflecting, at the least, her own reaction.

More overt evidence of the impact of my involvement with the program surfaced in a discussion which took place at a Collective meeting regarding the group's regular ritual of "personal sharing" at the beginning and end of each meeting. This discussion was initiated by one woman who prefaced her remarks stating that she had been thinking about the matter since she had talked with me during an interview the previous week. By the end of the meeting, the group had decided to modify the personal sharing format.

The substance of this discussion is examined more fully in Chapter IV, Section 3 in terms of the significance of the personal sharing to the Collective's process. At this point, however, the relevant issue is that the organization was changing "mid-stream" as a result of the increased self-reflectiveness stimulated by the research project. Initially, I panicked, thinking that my presence was "contaminating" the data; and the Collective members joked with me that I would have to divide my study into a before-and-after analysis to account for the impact of the research. In fact, however, the whole process surrounding the discussion of the personal sharing issues was treated as additional data for analysis.

With respect to the interactions just described, it is important to note that such self-reflectiveness about internal process is very much a part of the Collective's "normal" functioning (which is analyzed further in Chapter IV). What was important to note about the events were such things as how the discussion was initiated, how other women responded, what the consequences were, etc. While the subject of the

personal sharing seemed to emerge at the point that it did as a direct result of the questioning I was doing, the treatment of the issue within the Collective as a whole reflected typical organizational processes.

The receptivity of the program.

The third methodological issue to be discussed has to do with the particular receptivity of the Maiden Rock Collective--in marked contrast with that of the New England based community women's school--towards the research proposal. For example, while the latter had expressed concern about an "outsider" coming in to study the program, various Maiden Rock Collective members talked about the positive effect they thought my presence would have in helping the program to clarify its own goals and philosophy. Also, the New England school had indicated that they would not want me to attend coordinators' meetings until I had participated as a student or facilitator for at least one term. In contrast, Maiden Rock invited me to become a participant in the full range of program activities from the beginning of the research.

Several factors seem relevant in explaining the different receptivity of the two groups. On one hand, the Maiden Rock Collective was aware that I had been unsuccessful in negotiating with the other community school since I had shared part of the story with them during prelminary contacts as a way of explaining the late nature of my request to come out to Minneapolis. This seemed to make an impression on the Collective since the issue resurfaced at my first meeting with them. At that time, one woman told me that the group wanted to make themselves

more available to me than "the other group" had. This remark opened a discussion about the differences in the two groups. After some light joking, one woman more seriously made reference to Maiden Rock's "openness to any woman" which followed from their "radical lesbian, separatist politics." Her comment and the reactions of the others reflected the pride the group expressed in terms of its primary commitment to other women. It was suggested that this concern made them willing to support another woman's effort to carry out her research.

In retrospect, these comments "ring true" in the sense that I did experience direct support and encouragement from individuals in the Collective for my work as a feminist researcher. However, beyond their self-conscious reasoning, several other factors appear to have contributed to the Collective's active interest in the project.

On one hand, in comparison to the coordinators of the New England community school, the Maiden Rock Collective is an older, more professionally oriented group. Several members were then or had been academics and were more involved with research themselves. Maiden Rock has a shorter history than the New England school and also has experienced less turnover in central organizers, i.e., there were fewer "people from the past" who might have conflicting perspectives on the program. While the New England group feared misrepresentation of what they perceived as their complicated history, the Maiden Rock women did not seem to feel the same vulnerability around the potential analysis or criticism. In contrast, they repeatedly expressed an overriding confidence and self-satisfaction with what they were doing--conveyed in repeated

references to themselves as "an exceptional group of women"--even while admitting to certain problems.

At another level, it became apparent during the course of the research that Maiden Rock had been interested in developing national visibility and a national audience for some time--particularly for its summer programs--in marked contrast to the strictly local orientation of the New England program. An outsider's interest in researching the program was not only flattering but could help to "spread the word" about the program--perceived as a plus for the organization.

Finally, Maiden Rock's receptivity seemed influenced by the fact that the group had already had a positive experience having someone do research on the program during the first summer and the fall of 1976. A comment made by one of the Collective members at our first meeting reflected the positive feeling when she remarked on how it would be interesting to again have someone present in the group who could offer perspective as an outsider. This sentiment was expressed again from a different direction, as the research project came to a close, when several women expressed how they would again have to rely on themselves for paying close attention to their internal organizational dynamics.

While it might be speculated that the differences in the responses of the Maiden Rock Collective and those of the New England community women's school may have been caused by regional differences between the Northeast and the Midwest, there is little evidence to support this hypothesis. The different factors mentioned above seem to have more explanatory power. It is my hunch, however, that Maiden Rock's open

receptivity to the research project may, in fact, be exceptional rather than the rule for feminist organizations, particularly for those having a significant lesbian orientation. Given the various splits which have divided the women's movement (Bunch, 1976; Red Apple Collective, 1977) as well as the efforts to discredit, trivialize and/or disrupt the movement, it does not seem strange that feminist organizations would be reluctant to have an outsider assume the task of representing them in research. That the Maiden Rock women were as willing to do this speaks both for their confidence in themselves as well as their trust in another woman. For certain, the Collective's openness and active support of the research affected the collection and interpretation of data. Had there been greater distrust or resistance, a different profile may have emerged.

Approach to the Analysis of Data

The analysis and interpretation of data in participant observation is distinct from that in more quantitative research in that it is an ongoing and integral part of the research process. At each stage in the field work, it was necessary to assess the reliability of data, to confirm developing understandings, to verify and cross check perceptions and interpretations made from the wide variety of data sources. For example, having read over minutes from Collective meetings over a two-year period within the first week in the field, it was then necessary to flesh out the history, to explore Collective members' interpretations of the events and interactions, and to compare recorded dynamics with direct observations.

Throughout the research period, extensive field notes were taken recording the data gathered from the multitude of direct interactions, observations, respondent and informant interviews, and the analysis of documents. An additional part of these notes was a record of my own changing feelings and attitudes in response to the program and my role as researcher in the field. These personal reactions and interpretations were considered an important part of the data gathered, though they were distinguished from the records of direct observations and respondent reports. Furthermore, most of the tapes from formal interviews and Collective meetings were reviewed while still in the field and transcriptions begun. In the process of such review, new data was connected with previously gathered information and developing questions and hypotheses were noted.

While still in the field, early categorization of data was begun, i.e., putting similar kinds of information together such as information on the personal background of Collective members, data on organizational relationships and dynamics, and evidence of community attitudes towards the program. This process developed organically from the totalistic emersion in the field and the continuous collection of data.

The final stage of analysis was completed once having left the program and was approached in several ways. The first step was to reread all the field notes and to listen again to all the tapes. In the process of listening to the tapes, expanded transcriptions were made of the formal interviews and Collective meetings. After reviewing all the data once, an attempt was made to code all of the written notes according

to an extensive list of categories, e.g., "attitudes towards the farm location," "the meaning of feminist process," "significance of the lesbian identity of Collective members," and "the nature of personal commitments to the program." These categories emerged both from the final review of the field notes and from the analysis which had gone on continuously while in the field.

At this stage of the analysis, data gathered from participant observation, including the analysis of documents and from the formal interviews were treated similarly, coded in the same way in the same categories. An ongoing part of the analysis, however, required the evaluation of the quality of the data based on the sources and ways in which they were gathered, e.g., whether information was elicited or arose spontaneously; whether it surfaced in individual or group interactions; whether it was drawn from current self-reports or "historical" (written or taped) documents.

In the process of doing the first level coding, certain organizing themes began to emerge from the data with respect to the three broad areas of analysis: (a) the basic political ideology shaping the broad contours of the program, (b) the nature of the alternative feminist curriculum, and (c) the alternative organizational structure. As these themes emerged, the original multi-level coding scheme was abandoned and the data were synthesized in terms of each one. These themes became the basis for the final analysis of data presented in Chapter IV.

Footnotes

[1] Various alternative constructions have been used by writers to eliminate the inherent male-bias in the language which has historically subsumed the female under the male in the neuter case. In the present study, female pronouns are used for the neuter case to rectify this practice.

[2] The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1974, p. 28) has suggested greater flexibility in the traditional insistence on use of the third person and the passive voice in scholarly publications to avoid an unnecessarily stilted and cumbersome writing style. In the present study, I have chosen to use the first person to refer to the researcher since this more appropriately reflects the personal and subjective involvement I had with the Maiden Rock program as a participant-observer.

C H A P T E R IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Chapter IV presents the analysis of data based on the case study of the Maiden Rock alternative feminist educational program. The analysis is divided into three major sections: (a) Section 1--Political Ideology: "Outside the Patriarchy," (b) Section 2--On What Is Learned and How: Feminist Content and Process, and (c) Section 3--Organizational Structure: Historical Overview and Dynamic Tensions.

Section 1 includes an analysis of the basic beliefs and assumptions which shape the broad contours of the Maiden Rock program. This analysis is developed in terms of the program's commitment to working "outside the patriarchy." The meaning of this commitment is elaborated upon in terms of three defining features of the program which include: (a) its status as an autonomous feminist organization, (b) the identity as a "woman-identified" program, and (c) the design of programs for women only "temporarily removed" from the immediate context of their daily lives.

Section 2 looks more specifically at the program's development of an alternative feminist curriculum and pedagogy. The major portion of this section focuses on an analysis of "feminist process" as a critical feature of feminist education at Maiden Rock. The analysis of feminist process, i.e., the <u>way</u> in which feminist learning proceeds, is organized around four themes which together convey the major meanings of the

phrase. These are: (a) women "telling their stories," (b) "learning from the inside-out," (c) the "closer to a support group" environment, and (d) "non-hierarchical" learning.

Section 3 considers the kind of organizational structure Maiden Rock has created to plan and implement the educational program. The emphasis here will be on the structure of the coordinating Collective. The first part of the section includes an historical overview of the organization. The second part identifies three central tensions which emerge from the program's commitment to collectivist principles of organization and examines their impact on the development of the program. The three conflicts center around (a) the development of informal hierarchy, (b) the division of labor, and (c) the balance between task and process.

Section 1--Political Ideology: "Outside the Patriarchy"

While all feminists agree that women's unequal status in the society relative to men's is unjust and must be changed, within the feminist movement differences do exist in terms of the specific analyses of the roots of women's oppression and the necessary conditions for women's liberation.[1] While many of the women who have been centrally involved with the coordination of the Maiden Rock program have defined themselves personally as lesbian feminists, this has not been true of all, and the organization as a whole has not developed a

unified, clearly articulated political analysis of women's oppression. There has, however, been a dominant ideology which has influenced the shape of the organization and the fundamental character of the educational program. This ideology can best be understood by examining the meaning of the notion of operating "outside the patriarchy" which is a central reference point for the way in which the Maiden Rock Collective sees itself and thinks about feminist education.

References to the notion of operating either "in" or "outside" the patriarchy surfaced repeatedly in the conversations of Collective members in meetings, informal gatherings and individual interviews, and were reflected in such statements as "I work out there in the patriarchy" (e.g., in the university or a community college) and "We wanted to see what would happen if we got women outside the patriarchy" (referring to Maiden Rock's scheduling of educational programs for women only at the farm). These comments reflect a view that the dominant culture in this society is fundamentally shaped and controlled by male-defined values and male power; that "the patriarchy" is an alien and oppressive place for women which enforces their status as the second sex, restricting their desires, choices and aspirations. Furthermore, any institutional setting or environment ultimately dominated by male power and authority is considered part of that patriarchal culture which defines women's everyday experience.

The idea of operating "outside the patriarchy" suggests the possibility of women coming to define their own reality, priorities, cultural values, and forms within a separate "women's culture" or community.

As an alternative feminist educational program, Maiden Rock is committed to facilitate such a process, challenging the dominant ideology and structures of patriarchal society. Three primary reflections of Maiden Rock's commitment to such goals are: (a) its status as an autonomous women's program, (b) its self-definition as a "women-identified" program and (c) its design of educational programs for women only "temporarily removed" from the context of their everyday lives. The importance of each of these features of the program is elaborated in the following sections.

Autonomy.

Structurally, Maiden Rock attempts to work "outside the patriarchy" by remaining an independent program beyond the authority of any male-dominated institution. When asked about the importance of their alternative status, Collective members repeatedly affirmed that this autonomy was crucial in freeing them from accountability to any "higher" authority or purpose. As one woman commented,

> I suppose we'll always be changing what kind of alternative institution [Maiden Rock] will be, but I feel real different about putting my energies into something new. The difficulty of [doing] that feels a whole lot better than dealing with some already existing institution [with] the kind of useless fighting you have to carry on there--the kind of fighting a friend who's directing a women's studies program has to have with her dean. The way you always feel slightly subversive [hoping] that they don't really know what you're doing. That just doesn't feel good at all because there's someone else who has a whole lot of power over you all the time. I'm delighted when there are strong women's studies programs, and it's real important that we not feel rivalry; but it feels like what we're doing is really different. It feels to me that everything important about Maiden Rock really comes from being independent from any other established organization.

Underlying this belief is the assumption that affiliation with a traditional institution would compromise the basic goals and values of the program as a result of pressures to conform to external standards. This idea was frequently expressed in discussions with Collective members about offering Maiden Rock courses for credit through local colleges. While the program has tried to encourage college students to arrange independent study credit for some of the Maiden Rock courses, the Collective would not want to go through an accrediting process itself. As one woman pointed out, "If you call yourself an alternative and you start to do a traditional thing, you have to be careful!" Another woman remarked, "We would have to look like everyone else. We would have to include too many things--make [our programs] look like "courses".

One of the strongest positions taken on the importance of Maiden Rock's independence from a traditional institution was that of a collective member who had previously been involved as a student in an experimental one-year feminist arts program at a local college. The program was terminated prematurely by vote of the faculty and administration. Her interpretation of the faculty's action included the view that an all-woman feminist program had become too threatening to the values of the institution. Backing up her perceptions, she referred to the analysis of one of the coordinators of the Los Angeles Feminist Arts Studio that no feminist educational program (as opposed to single feminist courses) could survive within a male-dominated institution because of the ultimate contradiction in values and goals.

The program's concern for maintaining an independent status, thus, reflects the desire to avoid the necessity of accommodating itself to or explaining itself to a higher (male-dominated) authority. Their independence allows them to be as open as they want to about feminist goals and values and to structure and design educational programs according to internal priorities.

Woman-identified women.

The clearest public statement Maiden Rock has made about its social and political commitments has been through its self-definition as a "woman-identified" program. This term was used publicly for the first time in the summer 1977 course brochure:

> We are women. We are women of many different lifestyles and backgrounds. We are woman-identified women; we respect ourselves and we take seriously our relationships with other women, whether as mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, lovers, or as members of a women's community.

The term "woman-identified-woman" was first coined in 1970 by the New York group Radicalesbians as a statement of lesbian-feminist politics. The group broadened the meaning of lesbianism from reference primarily to sexual orientation to a political statement of self-affirmation and love for all women. The concept reflected the belief in the necessity of women developing a positive self-image through primary identification with other women rather than with men as most often happens within patriarchal society.

Many of the Collective members consider the program's decision to call itself "woman-identified" to be one of the hardest and more

significant ones they have made. As one woman phrased it,

> That's a hard one word. It took us a year and a half to have that word in the brochure--a lot of argument and a lot of pain and anger. . . . From the first brochure, there were certain women locally who said, "Oh, that's a place for lesbians," although we said nothing about this in the brochures. I understand it because most of the women in the Collective were lesbian and so "the thing must be." For a while, we were determined to prove that wrong. . . . We simply talked about ourselves as "feminists".

The decision to call themselves "woman-identified" was made by the Collective and the PPG at a meeting in the winter of 1977. At that time, there was a lot of discussion about the need for the program to be clearer in its publicity about who it was and what its commitments were. A tape of the meeting records one PPG member saying,

> The assumption is that [the Maiden Rock program] is by lesbians, for lesbians--but undercover. It's important for us to see this as an issue and not to keep it undercover. Now, it's not clear. If we feel confident that the brochure expressed who we are, we will feel more comfortable about drawing women in.

The pressure for the group to be clearer about its personal and political commitments came from several places. On one hand, as the comment above suggests, some felt there was a need to acknowledge an assumption already being made about the program. In addition, the program had been criticized by various women in the broader lesbian-feminist community for not being up-front about their identity. Seeing the lesbian feminist community as its primary support base, many women felt the need to be accountable and responsive to such criticisms; it was important to them to maintain their integrity and honesty.

While the terms "woman-identified" and "lesbian" have been used interchangeably by many feminists, Maiden Rock intentionally chose the

former to describe itself. The significance of the choice, however, seems somewhat ambiguous. At one level, various collective members explained that several of the PPG members did not define themselves as lesbians, but did think of themselves as "woman-identified" in some sense. The most broadly shared sense of the label in terms of the program seems to be commitment to give primary attention to women and their relationships with each other in a culture which assumes women to develop their identity with and through men. Comments made by some Collective members suggested, however, that although they did not like to admit it, the term was a less direct way of saying lesbian. One woman commented, "Now, it wouldn't be entirely truthful to say that in some ways it was a term that may have been a little bit of a cover for 'lesbian'." Another woman, after describing her preference for using "woman-identified" because it was less of a "label" and "focused more on the process" then laughed self-consciously and added "maybe I'm kidding myself."

For most of the women currently in the Collective, the lesbian identity contributes to a feeling of being "special". A common expression of this feeling are references to "lesbian energy." More than just a description of the activity of lesbian women, the phrase connotes a sense of pride and enthusiasm in the commitments and accomplishments of lesbian women. One facilitator referred to this feeling as she talked about the most distinctive characteristics of Maiden Rock.

> As a lesbian, I know how [important] it is to me how many of us involved are lesbians. I think. . . it's a lot easier to feel trusting. I think I've come to define for myself something I call

> "lesbian energy" even when not wholly made up of lesbians. . . . Lesbian presence feels very vital to me in Maiden Rock.

Another expression of this feeling came through in the question of one Collective member when she asked at a meeting if I knew how many other alternative feminist educational programs were run on "lesbian energy." She added she had heard that about 80% of all programs run by and for women were primarily organized by lesbians. Whether or not her figure was accurate, the comment reflected the consciousness that lesbians play a central role in the development of feminist programs in the current stage of the women's movement.

Describing the significance of the use of the term "woman-identified" by Maiden Rock, yet another Collective member remarked, "It's important to me to identify as a lesbian. I want people to know how much woman-energy really comes from lesbians. . . . Lesbian women are single-minded about women." Interpreting what she saw as the program's commitment to "radical lesbian feminist separatist" politics, she highlighted the goal of a complete "removal from patriarchal notions," i.e., all such assumptions, beliefs, values rooted in the system of male domination.

While taking pride in their lesbian feminist lifestyles and political perspective, most of the Collective members are unwilling to say that their desire or goal is to develop programs for lesbians only and believe that they have much to offer all women. At the same time, they are aware that any identification with lesbianism is likely to keep many women away from the program who they would ideally like to reach.

One woman's reflection on the program's decision to use the woman-identified label pointed out the tension. She said,

> We were women whose total attention, interest and connection was with women. . . . I don't think it's anti-male, but we're not really going to pay any attention to men. We're about other things! Which, when you come to think of it, scares the hell out of most women. Turns out, probably the majority of women--"Betty Crocker from Edina" [a middle class suburb]--are not going to come. We didn't know that originally.

At the time of the research, the Collective had come to accept that they were not likely to appeal to women who had had little introduction to feminist thinking. As various women commented, "We're not going to do first level consciousness-raising." While in individual interviews, women continued to express their concern about reaching more non-lesbian women, the Collective's discussions around upcoming program planning suggested that the clearest and strongest shared commitment among all the Collective members was to at least reach the lesbian audience. While for a long time women reported the Collective had talked internally about "discovering who our audience is," the group had come increasingly to accept that, in fact, lesbian women were a sizeable portion of that audience. This feeling was clearly reflected in the comment made by one woman in response to a financial report presented at one of the Collective meetings during the course of the research. After reviewing a listing of all the expenses and earnings for each of the specific educational events sponsored by the program over the previous two years, she exclaimed, "Look how much money lesbians have given us--cold cash! $335, $317, $170, $210 [for workshops specifically addressing lesbian issues]. That is a large amount of money. . . . I'm thinking about

who it is that wants our programs." She then added that there had also been high responses to programs on the arts, spiritual celebrations, workshops on mothers and daughters, and women and the professions. It was clear, however, that there was a particular sense of self-satisfaction and confirmation about lesbian interest in and support of the Maiden Rock program.

Numbers of Collective women did express sincere concern about not restricting the program's appeal to lesbian women only--not only for pragmatic concerns about increasing the numbers of participants, but on principle. As one woman who was the Collective member who expressed the clearest preference for the program's use of the label "women identified" rather than "lesbian" commented, "I like the term because I think it includes more than just lesbians and I want Maiden Rock to ultimately include non-lesbian women." At the same time, however, she acknowledged that the program had, in fact, had a stronger lesbian orientation, suggesting this may have resulted because of the prominent position at least three of the women in the Collective have had as "leading lesbians in the Twin Cities that are open in public"--a perception shared among many of the women talked to about the program. Preeminent in the thinking of all the Collective members at the time of the study, however, was an unwillingness to compromise the program's commitment to openly addressing lesbian issues as a way of attracting a wider audience.

While Maiden Rock consciously chooses to identify itself "outside" of and "against" the patriarchy, the program is regularly reminded that

a lesbian-identified project is not allowed to survive easily within a patriarchal society. The point is illustrated by an incident involving the attempt to schedule a Maiden Rock workshop at one of the local (Catholic) colleges. At a collective meeting, the coordinator of the workshop reported that after having received an initial "okay" from the college, she was later told by an administrator that the space would not be available. This change in the college's decision came on the heels of the administrator having heard that lesbian women would probably be attending the workshop. After some diplomatic negotiating, the college did finally agree to provide the space, however, the incident symbolized the difficulty of dealing with homophobic attitudes.

The scheduling incident is an example of a relatively minor obstacle the program faces as a result of being identified with lesbians. A far more serious problem currently faces the group, however, as a result of having been denied a zoning permit by the local town surrounding the farm. The zoning problem emerged in the spring of 1977 after the program received publicity in the Minneapolis newspapers. Apparently, in reaction to the coverage, the farm owner was contacted by the local zoning board informing her about the need to have a permit to conduct educational programming. The Collective decided to put in a formal zoning request which, however, was ultimately denied.

The final negative votes of the zoning board members were made on technical grounds, e.g., concern about increased traffic about the "preservation" of the agricultural character of the area, etc. However, minutes from the board meetings revealed clearly hostile feelings on the

part of the local residents towards the program. Repeated questions about "what was really being taught," insinuations about programming for women only, and at least one explicit objection raised about homosexuality corroborated the Collective's interpretation that the decision largely reflected fear of and discrimination against lesbians.

In spite of the denial of the zoning permit, the general feeling in the Collective has been that the program could continue to work around the decision by not publicly advertising the location of the farm. At a meeting during the period of the research when plans were being made for the use of the farm the following summer, one woman raised the issue of the permit denial. Most of the other women shrugged off the concern, however, with comments that they would somehow be able to manage.

Such an easy dismissal of the zoning issue seemed to reflect an avoidance of something which could affect a significant part of Maiden Rock's program. At a later point, one Collective member acknowledged that she, in fact, had difficulty discussing the issue and believed other women shared some of the same reluctance. Because of the zoning problem, she added, she felt the Collective was not thinking in terms of the full potential of the farm environment; that she herself was investing more in the idea of acquiring housing in the Cities which would enable the program to duplicate part of the total living/learning environment at the farm.

Before the zoning question became an issue, Maiden Rock had already begun to develop programs based in the Cities. There are also other

factors (to be elaborated upon later) which limit the potential use of the farm. However, Collective members are painfully aware that the decisions regarding use of the farm are no longer entirely their's to make largely because of the threatening nature of a "woman-identified" education program.

A community of women.

Temporary removal. The third major reflection of Maiden Rock's attempt to move "beyond the patriarchy" is the design of educational programs so that participants have an opportunity to experience themselves as part of a "community of women" undivided by their usual relationships to men in families at work and in communities. Within such a collective female environment, women are encouraged to explore new ways of thinking and being. To do this, Maiden Rock courses are: (a) open to women only and (b) designed to remove women temporarily from the expectations, pressures and assumptions about their lives as women that are embedded within patriarchal culture. This ideal is illustrated in the comments made by one Collective member as she described her initial interest in working with the program.

> I thought it sounded wonderful [to create a place] where women could go and be with each other. To have a program run by feminists so that women would have a real opportunity to withdraw from the patriarchy and see what would emerge. Because no one really knows, I think, what is "feminine", what is "womanly", "female", and "feminist". We can hardly get away from this culture long enough to find that out.

Programming for women only is considered the baseline feature of Maiden Rock as an alternative feminist educational project by Collective

members. The point is emphasized by one woman as she contrasted Maiden Rock to a university women's studies program.

> The other huge thing, and women's studies can't say this, is that [in Maiden Rock courses] we're all women. It is a supportive environment for women to be powerful in, in a way that's not possible in a university. The women will go farther faster because of that "closer to a support group" setting. Sometimes I think that may be the key--we simply stand outside the system and say, "public lectures, fine; music benefits, fine; anybody can come. But learning is for women!" Not because we don't like men, but because inevitably, when there's a man, somebody is going to defer to him. And how in the world is she not supposed to do that?! I mean I do that [and I'm a university professor].

The assumption is that, particularly given the focus of the Maiden Rock workshops, the presence of men can create an inhibiting effect on many women who will therefore not be able to benefit fully from the educational experience. When the educational endeavor involves the fundamental reexamination of the basic assumptions which have shaped women's lives, the general pattern of women's deferral in the presence of men is exacerbated, and the Collective assumes that women will be less willing to take the risks.

Integral to the commitment to educational programming for women only is the belief that women's development remains distorted and limited as long as they remain enmeshed within the web of expectations and pressures imposed on them within a male-dominated society. In order for women to come in closer touch with their "true" potential, they must remove themselves as much as possible from the internal and external messages pushing them to conform to "appropriate" female roles. Talking about the importance of programming for women only at Maiden Rock, one collective member emphasized that "Women experience themselves

when women are with women. We get to experience who we [really] are." Giving an example from her own experience as a participant at the program's first summer workshop, she added both literally and symbolically that "I learned how to run my own way at Maiden Rock." In the same discussion, another Collective member picked up on the theme paraphrasing the words of a student of hers.

> She said that in the life of the patriarchy, there is no "I" [for women]. We have no experience of ourselves there. [Maiden Rock] says, "Come out of that--even if it's just a weekend. Come out and see what it is to learn in an environment of sameness; where there is an absolute 'I' for each person there; where nobody is 'other'; nobody is 'weird'."

To facilitate participants' experience of themselves in new ways, Maiden Rock structures educational offerings so as to "temporarily remove" women from their everyday interactions and associations with men to experience an all female environment. The original idea of temporarily removing women was intimately connected to the model of overnight programming at the farm where women would literally--physically--be further removed from their daily environment. In the city, however, without access to overnight facilities, the program has had to settle for scheduling weekend workshops without the overnight dimension. While removal in this way is far less dramatic than that which occurs at the farm, the Collective believes that a condensed weekend format comes closer to that experience than would a course which met for one to two hours over a more extended period of time. (Although, there have been a few workshops offered on such a model.) Much of the discussion of the "temporary removal" makes most sense in terms of the model of overnight programming at the farm, however; and in a subsequent section, the

particular advantage of the farm location will be elaborated upon.

A primary goal of the "temporary removal" is to create an environment in which participants must rely on other women for stimulation and support. As one Collective member commented, "The removal factor is important--the notion of living together, even for a weekend, and making something 'work'. There is a power in that." Encouraging women to seek acknowledgement from other women in a culture which teaches them to turn to men for knowledge and affirmation is a central part of the Maiden Rock educational enterprise. While the Collective often talks about empowering individuals to make conscious choices in their lives, implicit it is a belief in the importance of women coming to identify their personal interests with those of other women. As one Collective member commented,

> What participants learn real quickly is their isolation; they can't [make the changes] themselves. They need other women. . . . I think the real personal power of women is a collective model. That is, individual power is some kind of myth--trying harder like Avis. Individual power can only "glow" when there is a collective entity.

The value placed on women discovering their commonality with other women is illustrated in the comments of another Collective member as she talked about the impact of participation in Maiden Rock programs on two specific individuals she knew. After describing some of the particular changes each of them had made (e.g., for one woman, setting up a collective women's household, contributing money to feminist organizations, organizing women in her workplace), she emphasized what she saw as the critical issue:

> "What I really want to say is that they are really changing the nature of their workplace for the women who work in them. Because they've stopped seeing themselves as 'special' by virtue of education or culture."

Comments made by participants recorded in written and taped evaluations from a variety of Maiden Rock workshops indicate that, in fact, many women do take away from their experience new and/or confirmed feelings about women's worth and the importance of mutual support. As an example, common responses to questions about the "most valuable aspects" of the workshops include phrases such as "a powerful, wonderful sense about women," "a grand feeling of being with a super group of women," and "a sense of community with other women." Similar sentiments were expressed by most of the participants at one of the week-long farm workshops in response to the question of how they hoped to follow up the experience. These included statements such as, "I'm going to align myself a lot more strongly with the feminist community in as many ways as I can. I have been 'pre-political' [up to now], but I need that support"; "I want to find other women at work when and wherever I get a job, rather than keeping a low profile as a feminist"; "I want to work at building women's communities and women's institutions."

A more systematic or more in-depth analysis of the lasting impact of participation in Maiden Rock programs is beyond the scope of the present study. Minutes from a follow-up meeting one month after the farm-based workshop just mentioned suggest actual changes fell short of initial intentions--not surprisingly. However, initial evaluation comments from many workshops, such as those quoted, reflect that for many women there are at least enhanced subjective feelings of mutual

support for and connection with other women.

Programming on the farm. One of the most distinctive aspects of the Maiden Rock experience has been the scheduling of overnight educational programs on the farm. The previous discussion of the zoning problem indicated that continued use of the farm has become problematic; and that partially as a result, the Collective has given more emphasis to the city-based workshops. At the same time, most of the Collective women and facilitators interviewed still consider the farm to be a more ideal setting for creating the experience of a "community of women" within the context of a living/learning situation. The following section looks more specifically at the consequences of programming at the farm. The analysis first considers what seem to be the special features of the rural setting and closes with a focus on some of the problems built in to programming at the farm.

Special features. In the many informal conversations and more formal interviews with women who had participated in workshops at the farm, three themes repeatedly surfaced with regard to the special character of those experiences. One of these has to do with the impact of the more "total" removal of participants from their daily lives because of the distance and seclusion of the farm. The second has to do with the more "total" educational experience resulting from the overnight format. The third relates to the "liberating" quality of both the particular geographic area and the environment as "woman-controlled" space.

With respect to the distance, many facilitators and workshop participants commented on the greater ease they experienced in removing

themselves psychologically from the pressures and expectations of their everyday lives once at the farm. For example, comparing her experience facilitating a two-day workshop in the city with a week-long one at the farm, one woman described the greater engagement of participants at the latter. While she noted several factors which might have accounted for the difference, she also referred to the particular impact of the farm location. "I think if you can get people out in that setting, it helps. I really enjoyed doing that. It was beautiful. Relaxation and nothing interfering." As another facilitator put it, she was able to "leave all the crap behind" making it easier to be freer with the group.

An interaction which took place at one of the city-based Friday evening/all-day Saturday workshops which I attended illustrates the kind of "interference" which the program tries to eliminate through the farm workshops. To open the morning session, the facilitators asked participants to share their thoughts and reactions since the previous evening's session. One woman began to describe what happened to her that morning before leaving her house. She told the rest of the group that she had wanted to arrive at the workshop free from distracting thoughts or preoccupations in order to have her full attention on the topic at hand. Her intentions were subverted, however, by a frustrating interaction with her child over breakfast. At first, she said, she resented the fact that she was forced to respond to the needs of her child, interrupting her own thoughts about the workshop. She added, however, that on second thought, the incident seemed to serve as a "reality check" reminding her of her actual daily responsibilities which were temporarily left at the workshop.

In response to the woman's story, the facilitator--who was also a Collective member--told the group that Maiden Rock was trying to acquire housing in the city so that workshops could be scheduled overnight to eliminate just that kind of interruption. Sighs were heard around the room indicating that many of the participants, including the woman who told the story, thought the possibility of an overnight arrangement would be wonderful. Presented with the alternative, the woman who had related the story seemed ready to forgo the "value" of her reality check, making her original interpretation of the morning's event appear more like a rationalization than a genuine preference.

As I talked with the facilitator from the Collective at the end of the workshop, she referred back to the morning discussion as an illustration of the program's reason for wanting to remove women temporarily from their daily contexts as part of the educational experience. Comments made by various participants during the oral evaluation of the workshop at the end of the day indicated that even at this more time-limited city workshop many felt they had experienced a special atmosphere distinct from their daily environment. As one woman commented, "I feel like I've been transported to another planet. I've been transplanted from my environment and feel like I've been taking care of myself.

A second aspect of the overnight farm programs which enhances the educational experience is the greater variety of activities and possibilities for interactions among participants. In the process of spending time together more informally, e.g., preparing meals, eating,

cleaning up and just relaxing, women have the opportunity to share more of themselves discovering the differences and commonalities of their experience. As one woman who had been both a facilitator and a participant at different farm workshops commented, "You're with each other in all aspects. Even though there are more formalized times set for discussion, a lot of discussion carried over into meals, in cooking and just about everyting."

A more concrete example of the kind of unusual sharing made possible through such a "total" environment is the experience described by a participant in the first and longest (two week) workshop at the farm. One of the more novel informal activities which some participants were involved with was the construction of an outhouse for the program's use. In addition to the excitement of being involved in doing construction for the first time, the woman recalled "the best damn conversation" she had had with another woman while digging the hole for the outhouse. As she told the story, they were talking about the deaths of people they had loved when the other woman began to share her feelings about the recent death of her mother. The woman then described the profound quality of the experience the two shared as they became conscious of the symbolic meaning of their "digging this hole. The whole thing was right."

A discussion at one of the Collective meetings held during the research period regarding the scheduling of a proposed workshop for public school teachers illustrates the importance the program attaches to the kinds of interactions facilitated among participants at overnight

offerings at the farm. The question posed was whether to schedule the program in the Cities or at the farm. One woman reported that a friend, a teacher in the City, had suggested that more teachers would attend a workshop in town because of the inconvenience of transportation to the farm. In spite of the advice, the Collective decided to schedule an extended weekend workshop at the farm.[2] The basis for the decision was the belief that the total living-learning context facilitated at the farm (and difficult to replicate in the Cities) would be an important part of the experience for the teachers. The comment made by one Collective member captured the attitude which was generally shared.

> I was just thinking. . . that doing something like that at the farm is just so wonderful--to be in that environment. I mean just thinking about all those teachers being there together. Because there's so much that happens at supper and after, when people get a chance. . . I mean what are people going to <u>do</u> out there? There's no TV, no. . .

It was obvious that the Collective was interested in sponsoring an educational experience which would be far different from the kind of two-day conference a department of education might sponsor at some university. In this particular case, they were willing to risk having a lower enrollment, and probably reaching a more feminist identified group in order to create a more "total" experience for those who would attend. During the discussion, one woman suggested that the greater reluctance of some teachers to travel to the farm might be less a matter of cost and/or inconvenience and more a fear of the unpredictable and more intense experience an overnight workshop might entail. (The implication of this attitude on the part of the Collective in terms of who the program reaches is discussed in more detail at a later point.)

The discussion of the farm is not complete without mentioning two other less tangible elements contributing to the intensity of the workshop experiences often described by facilitators and participants. These are the impact of: (a) the particular geographical setting and (b) the awareness of the farm as woman-controlled and--in terms of the barn renovations--women-created space.

Repeatedly, women expressed the feeling that the special beauty and expansiveness of the area enhanced their ability to open themselves up to introspection and new feelings. The farm "manager" of two summers spoke to the issue directly.

> I think the environment is extremely powerful. But I don't think we as Maiden Rock staff can take full credit. A lot has to do with the geography and I think the vibrations. You know, some people talked about there being a "spirit of the valley." There's something out there that's real magical or spiritual in some sense.

Reflecting on her own experience at the farm, one Collective member commented, "Simply for me, being real close to nature is always inspirational. It always opens me up. . . . I get more sitting watching the sunset than meeting in someone's home."

The perceptions of the farm manager are interesting since she had a special vantage point for observing participants' reactions to the farm. She was the person responsible for orienting women when they first arrived and was present at all of the summer workshops. Free from the more direct responsibilities of facilitators and able to move in and out of a participant role, she was something of an "outside" observer on the premises. Filled with anecdotes and observations, the farm manager described the common patterns of reactions to the farm.

Most women, she said, appeared to go through an initial period of uncertainty, testing out new people and the unfamiliar setting. Some would be nervous and apparently anxious about the "rough" accommodations, e.g., sleeping on mats on the wood barn floor, using an outhouse, etc. Others were more immediately excited, "getting off on how beautiful [the farm] is and how neat all these women are." For some, she continued, the "openness" of the environment and the removal from everyday patterns put them in touch with sources of discomfort and dissatisfaction in their lives. She noted, "Some women are overwhelmed when they get in touch with so many feelings. They get out, go for a walk, are alone or smell fresh air, and they go crazy with all the feelings they've stored up for months." More commonly, this type of reaction represented an early stage of their response, later shifting to a positive primary focus on the present setting. She did, however, remember at least one case in which a participant became deeply emersed in grief over a recent divorce. This became a primary focus for her attention reflected in frequent crying and repeated references to the issue. In a few cases, the farm manager added, women actually left the farm seemingly overwhelmed by what they were coming in touch with.

None of the participants actually interviewed nor comments from available evaluations reported such overwhelming experiences. By her own report, the farm manager indicated that such patterns were not typical. The program obviously cannot control what will surface for participants, though there is a clear consciousness that the critical focus on women's personal experiences can be highly emotionally charged.

While the natural setting is not something the program itself created, the renovation of the barn is the conscious and exclusive work of the Collective and many other women from the Cities. For those participants at the farm who actually worked on the barn, there is a direct feeling of pride and accomplishment in the product of their labor. Even those who did not work directly on the project, however, expressed feeling a vicarious excitement knowing that women had assumed full responsibility for the job. As one woman who had been to Maiden Rock at different times as both a facilitator and as a participant reflected, "I was thinking about the space and how nice it feels knowing that a lot of women worked on it."

Closely linked to the consciousness of the farm as woman-made space is the awareness of the setting as woman-controlled space. One former PPG member, workshop participant, and facilitator linked her excitement about the farm to both the special geography and the farm's status as "women's space." She commented, "I just love that farm so much. . . . I think that's because it's women's space and it's safe. I think the physical environment gives women an experience they can't get in a four-wall setting. . . [without] so much space." The feeling of safety in "woman-controlled" space may be particularly important for lesbian women who know more clearly that they are vulnerable, if not in danger, in male-controlled environments. The feeling of pride in women's work on the barn, however, seemed to be shared by all the participants.[3]

Drawbacks. On the other side of the coin, there seem to be two major problems which result from the programming of overnight workshops

at the farm. These can be thought of in terms of: (a) the "distractions" of the rural setting and (b) the problem of "getting women there."

The previous section indicated that for many women, the farm setting makes it easier for them to open up to the emotional and intellectual experience stimulated by the workshop and encourages a sense of options and the power to change. Comments made by a smaller number of women, however, indicated that for some, the natural environment became a distraction from the more substantive focus of the workshops. The farm manager talked about her own resistance to focusing on political and "intellectual" discussion at the farm.

> I am an educator. I've taught. I've been in school. I have a lot of intellectual needs. But when I'm in the country, I want to do something else. I don't want to read. Another part of me emerges. I like to be physically active, outdoors, alone. . . . I didn't want to go "to college."

She noted a similar tendency among numbers of professional women she observed. While many came geared up to pursue the particular topic at hand, she observed them responding primarily to the opportunity to "just relax."

> A lot of professional women come to pursue an area of interest. They're there for three hours and get wiped out by exhaustion. They're really not into conversing at their normal pace. . . putting tire tread on the world! You know, they just relax, get a little blank, eat a lot, play around, want to sleep late, enjoy being around other people.

Another woman described some of her frustrations as a facilitator of a farm workshop when her desire to engage in more structured, substantive discussion conflicted with participants' interests in "just taking off." While she de-emphasized the seriousness of this conflict,

her comment did reflect some of the tension which exists between the more spontaneous/recreational dimension of the farm programs and the more structured intellectual focus.

The ideal for the farm workshops is to combine all the varied activities into a holistic living/learning experience. Women in the Collective are reluctant to see Maiden Rock as a "retreat" or summer camp although it appears that many participants use the program in that way. One former PPG member and workshop facilitator stated her own belief that the farm should be used more as a "retreat or escape" as a way of encouraging greater use of the facility. If programs were planned in that way, she thought, "more women would go out and work for the weekend like the gardening collective which worked very well."[4]

The resistance among Collective members to seeing Maiden Rock as a "retreat" seems to come from two places. One is the image of Maiden Rock as a place where women can pursue serious intellectual work. A longer range vision of the program shared by some is for Maiden Rock to be able to sponsor graduate students doing feminist research. While some of the Collective members expressed uncertainty about the likelihood of such a development, one woman in particular talked about the idea as a real possibility. To accept the model of Maiden Rock as a "retreat" conflicted with the headier image of the "Women's Learning Institute of the Midwest." At the same time, the Collective has had to come to terms with the fact that many women interested in attending summer workshops are combining study with vacation. In discussing plans for the summer 1978 program, the Collective agreed they should try to

schedule those workshops at the farm which could better accommodate those interests.

One of the ways in which the Collective has tried to resolve the tensions around the idea of the program as a "retreat" is by setting different expectations for farm versus city-based programs. As one Collective member phrased the issue, she wanted to see Maiden Rock schedule at the farm those workshops which really used the rural environment in a more direct way; and to schedule in the city those kinds of workshops which relied more on "book learning." At the same time, however, the Collective's interest in acquiring space in the city where workshops could be scheduled overnight reflects the persistent belief that the experience of a women's learning community--even if short-lived--is a powerful dimension of the Maiden Rock experience.

A second source of resistance to the idea of Maiden Rock as a "retreat" seems to follow from the Collective members' concern that the program has some farther reaching social and political impact. Traditional definitions of the political have been fundamentally challenged by radical feminist analysis of women's oppression which has tried to make the links between personal life and power relations. As Eisenstein (1979) succinctly summarized, "Sex as the personal becomes political as well, and women share their position of oppression because of the very sexual politics of the society" (p. 18). The effort at integrating the psychological, the cultural and the political dimensions of human experience has been one of the most important contributions of feminist theory to an understanding of women's oppression. At the same time, however, debate still continues around the real meaning

of the notion that "the personal is political" and many feminists still feel sensitive to the charges that they are more concerned with the former than the latter.

In response to direct questions about the political nature of the program, Collective members repeatedly referred to the significant changes made in the lives of individual women who have participated in Maiden Rock programs. The changes made by two women in particular, one of whom later joined the Collective, were held up as evidence of the program's impact. One Collective member was insistent on defining the changes these women had made as "political" and not "just personal" because they had involved an increased identification with and commitment to working for the interests of all women, not just their own. She particularly highlighted the kinds of links these women were making with other women in their workplaces. Other Collective members still talked about the impact in terms of "personal growth" or "personal change." As one woman stated, Maiden Rock's greatest impact was,

> On individual personal lives, on the person. . . . No question about it. Getting women to think, to challenge in their own personal thinking and values, however, and wherever they go with it. Maiden Rock has had an impact definitely on people's feelings and thinking.

While there seems to be clear consensus among Collective members that any impact the program does have on social and political changes is mediated through the changes in individual women's lives, the organization is still sensitive to the charge that it is not <u>sufficiently</u> politically oriented. Going back to the issue originally raised, i.e., the Collective's reaction to the image of Maiden Rock as an educational

retreat, the final point should be made. In spite of some of the ambiguity and lack of clear articulation of the political nature of the program, the Collective is unwilling to forsake the goal of having the program have some impact "beyond itself." The view of Maiden Rock as more of a "retreat" or "recreational" program seems to undercut the Collective's position that the program does have political impact. These issues will be treated again in the conclusion in Chapter V.

The second major contradiction in the programming at the farm is highlighted in the Collective's discussion of the scheduling of the workshop for public school teachers (discussed earlier, see page 152) which was being planned during the research period. In their effort to create the "temporary removal" from patriarchal culture, Maiden Rock has created certain limitations on the numbers and types of women who are likely to attend their programs, low enrollments in the longer farm workshops have, in fact, been one of the problems the program has faced.

It is difficult to assess why any particular workshop has been under-enrolled. Part of the reason may of course be a limited interest in a particular topic. However, the consistently lower enrollments at the extended farm-based versus city workshops suggest that other factors are at work. Three characteristics common to all farm-based programs would seem to explain this pattern more fully: (a) the greater time commitment required, (b) higher cost, and (c) the "unknown quantity" about an overnight experience "out in the country." In other words, to attend a farm workshop, a woman must have a certain flexibility of time,

access to transportation and money as well as the "gumption" to place oneself in an unfamiliar situation for an extended period of time.

Spending a weekend or a whole week out of the cities would be a significant time commitment for many women, especially those with families, children and/or full-time jobs. In spite of the fact that the program offers child care at the farm, many women would probably not consider bringing their children for such an extended stay. On the other hand, making alternate child care arrangements to accommodate overnight stays could be difficult as well as costly. Whatever information the program has on file about the background of participants of farm workshops indicates that most are, in fact, not married and do not have children.[5]

In addition to the time element, another aspect of the farm workshops which seems likely to discourage enrollment is the higher cost relative to the city-based programs. Most of the weekend farm workshops have run from $40 to $50 in comparison to an average of $20 for city workshops. The week-long farm programs have cost as much as $120. Relative to other professionally run educational programs, the cost of Maiden Rock courses is not unreasonable. Relative to the incomes of many women, however, and relative to the costs of other alternative and/or feminist services, the Maiden Rock fees are relatively high.

Maiden Rock has offered a system of "energy exchange" by which any woman could defray up to half the cost of a workshop in exchange for work contributed to the program. During 1976-77, approximately one-third of all participants were on some form of energy exchange.

What something is "worth" to an individual is clearly a relative phenomenon having psychological dimensions. Here the comments made by one Collective member are pertinent. She talked about her own attitudes towards money when she was married to a middle-class professional man. While she never had qualms about spending what she wished on "the needs of her family," it would have been very difficult to spend $40 on herself for "just a workshop on women." Much has been written about the guilt many women experience doing/buying things for themselves alone in light of their socialization towards meeting the needs of <u>others</u> first. Clearly, for women without much money, there are also issues of real economic constraints.

The fact that Maiden Rock workshops are <u>not</u> offered for credit and are not, for the most part, oriented towards specific "survival" or vocational concerns may, in fact, make them a "luxury" for many women. Minutes from past Collective meetings reveal that this issue has come up intermittently from the first year of planning. As one former Collective member commented particularly regarding the farm-based workshops,

> We may [have been] making an assumption. . . that coming to the farm isn't a big deal. Then I began to think that spending a week at the farm was a luxury and not everybody could pull it off--getting a week off from work, getting the transportation and the money.

In addition to questions of time and money, a third less tangible dimension of all the overnight farm workshops, already briefly mentioned in the discussion of the workshop for public school teachers, is the greater "unknown" quantity, i.e., what might happen within a group

of strange women gathered together twenty-four hours for two or three days. That is, the very element of the farm workshops which the Collective values so highly--the removal which requires participants to become temporarily dependent on a community of women--may be a factor keeping certain women away.

To participate in any kind of educational program, regardless of focus, for an overnight weekend involves putting oneself "in the hands" of the sponsoring organization and facilitators to a much greater degree than at a day-long activity. Going out to a relatively isolated rural location an hour away from one's home puts one even less in control. Putting herself in the position of a woman considering attending a Maiden Rock workshop at the farm, one former Collective member talked about her own reactions to the idea of going to an extended overnight workshop, particularly if she were not very familiar with the organizers.

> It's threatening as hell. . . . I feel like I'm a fairly gutsy person, and I would think twice about going some place for a week. It's threatening to leave what's familiar and not to be able to control your environment.

In the past, the lack of very clear descriptions of the actual schedule of activities at the overnight Maiden Rock programs would contribute to the uncertainty of what exactly would be going on. Neither can the program rely on "reputation" of facilitators since, for the most part, they are not widely known outside of the feminist (or lesbian-feminist) community.

Paradoxically, what may be particularly threatening about Maiden Rock workshops for numbers of women is that they are, in fact, designed

for "women only" by a feminist, if not also lesbian-identified programs. It was noted earlier that the Collective has been aware that certain individuals and groups in the broader community have assumed Maiden Rock programs were designed primarily for lesbians. As one former Collective member commented, "It was on the grapevine" among area feminists and lesbians that many lesbians were involved. Information gathered on participants from interviews, analysis of application forms and direct observation suggests that large numbers of Maiden Rock participants are not, in fact, lesbian-identified (although there are no clear figures). For those women who might have interest in specific workshops offered but also have concerns about the lesbian connection, it does seem likely that they might feel less comfortable signing for one of the farm-based workshops. As one woman phrased the issue, trying to put herself in the shoes of a woman threatened by the lesbian association, ". . . in the city, I can jump into my car and leave [a workshop if I'm not comfortable], but from a hundred miles away at the farm. . ."

Collective members repeatedly acknowledged that women who are not already somehow feminist-identified are less likely to attend Maiden Rock workshops. They added, however, that they have finally come to accept that they are not primarily in the business of offering "consciousness-raising I." As one woman phrased the issue, "We are not going to attract 'fearful' women. . . . We make the college women's studies programs seem more palatable--more safe."

The suggestion that many women may be intimidated by the strongly feminist, if not lesbian, overtones of the program does not seem

unlikely in light of the defensive reaction feminism has generally provoked in the larger society. Interestingly, one former workshop facilitator, a lesbian herself, suggested that even within the women's community, some might be intimidated by the Maiden Rock programs because of the stature of some of the more visible Collective members as well as the strong feminist rhetoric used in program publicity. As she explained, "The way that Maiden Rock presents its whole self as being 'feminist' and 'intentional' probably does make many of us worry about if we can be those things 'enough'."

There is, of course, no way of knowing exactly why there have been lower enrollments in many of the extended farm-based workshops. It is also important to acknowledge that, in fact, some of these workshops have been widely attended when particular issues or facilitators have been involved. Overall, however, the city-based workshops have filled more consistently. What is significant is that in the process of trying to create educational programs which do remove women temporarily from their daily environments allowing them to experience themselves as part of a women's community, the program has set up certain conditions which work against some of their own goals and which limit the reach of the program. If the Collective does manage to acquire in-city housing to approximate the "temporary removal" so clearly part of the farm-based workshops, this might make the programs accessible to more women.

Summary

Section 1 has presented an analysis of the basic beliefs and assumptions about the nature of women's oppression and women's needs which have shaped the broad contours of the Maiden Rock educational program. This analysis has emerged from an elaboration of the Collective's commitment to working "outside the patriarchy" and has been examined in terms of three issues: (a) the importance of organizational autonomy, (b) the Collective's identification as women-identified women, and (c) the design of educational programs so that participants experience themselves as part of a community of women. Section 2 of the Analysis of Data will examine more specifically the nature of the educational program looking at both the substantive focus of the curriculum as well as the particular feminist approach to learning.

Section 2--On What Is Learned and How: Curriculum Content and "Feminist Process"

> We believe that feminist education has not just a different content from other approaches to education, but has a different form and style.
>
> Maiden Rock course brochure
> Summer 1976

Section 2 examines more specifically the nature of the Maiden Rock curriculum, focusing the analysis on the city- and farm-based workshops which form the core of the educational program. As the quote above indicates, the Collective considers that feminist education involves the

development of new content as well as new approaches to learning. The present analysis looks first at the substantive focus of the specific Maiden Rock course offerings and secondly at the ways in which learning is approached. Because of the Collective's own emphasis on the "how" of learning, i.e., what they refer to as "feminist process," the analysis is weighed towards an examination of that dimension of the educational programs. Finally, Section 2 concludes with a brief discussion of the workshop facilitators.

On what is learned.

As the review made clear, the male-centered academic disciplines have systematically ignored and/or distorted the study of women, and have considered the female experience as peripheral to "the important business of the world." One of the central tasks of the Maiden Rock program is to place the study of women's lives and the roots of their oppression at the center of the educational enterprise. As a former PPG member commented, "Education at Maiden Rock lends the eye to the woman. That's the focus. That's basic. It's the stepping stone--first on the list."

The subject matter of specific Maiden Rock workshops does not fit neatly into clear-cut categories or into the framework of traditional academic departments. There are not separate "history", "English", or "psychology" courses; there are no "upper" and "lower" levels. Most generally, the curriculum focuses on the study of women's experiences --the sources of their oppression and possibilities for change.

During the first year, the Collective spent months discussing the kinds of issues they felt would be important to address with a feminist education program. From these discussions, the Collective identified two central organizing themes around which they planned two extended overnight programs at the farm--one two-week and an additional four-week session (the latter, however, was cancelled due to low enrollment). These themes are described in course brochures as: (a) the importance of "challenging myths" and (b) learning to become "intentional".

The "myths" which the program believes need challenging are described as those deeply rooted ideas about women's nature and function which are embedded within the fabric of patriarchal culture. The assumption is that by critically examining the nature of these ideas and their power in shaping and defining female experience, women can begin to take more conscious control over the direction of their lives. Learning to become "intentional"--to become an active agent in one's life is thus integrally connected to the theme of challenging myths. As described in the first summer's course brochure,

> When we probe the myths, we have inherited and learn to be intentional about the lives we have; we can become makers, not receivers, of our environment and culture. . . . Once [the myths] are visible, we can then consider how to confront them; whether to refute them, invert them, remake them or start over with fresh visions and new stories.

In addition to the extended sessions, the Collective coordinated a series of eight weekend workshops organized around more narrowly

focused topics, e.g., Women and Divorce, Feminist Theater, Women and Sexuality. Since the first summer, all of the Maiden Rock programs have been similarly planned around more specific substantive areas. However, the themes of "challenging myths" and "intentionality" have continued to be used as umbrella concepts linking the many individual workshops together.

During the second year of operation, the Maiden Rock curriculum was primarily planned by the Program Planning Group which began essentially from scratch. According to one former PPG member, the group tried to "invent the wheel" of all the possible topics and issues which would be important to include in a total liberating education for women. From these discussions, eight broad areas emerged around which most of the specific topics and issues converged. These included: (a) identity, (b) heritage, (c) skills, (d) physical, emotional and spiritual patterns, (e) social, political and material patterns, (f) impact on the dominant system, (g) woman as subject not object, and (h) models for integrating process and task. To give a sense of the wide scope and variety of issues generated in this early stage of planning, a specific listing of these topics is included in Appendix D. These categories were used most specifically in designing the workshop series in the winter/spring of 1976-77 and summer of 1977 seasons, and were most clearly articulated in the PPG's own words in the summer course brochure (also included in Appendix D).

Many of the topics originally generated by the PPG have never evolved into specific workshops. To present a clearer picture of the

programs, Maiden Rock has actually offered, I have used a slightly different schema of categories which overlap but slightly modify the eight areas listed above. These categories are themselves overlapping and somewhat arbitrarily defined; and not every workshop fits neatly into them. Still, the categories are useful as one way of characterizing the substantive focus of the various individual workshops Maiden Rock has offered. They are: (a) identity, relationships and sexuality, (b) women's heritage/women's culture, (c) work, politics and economics, (d) physical, emotional and spiritual development, and (e) miscellaneous. The following listing includes a sample of representative workshop titles within each of the areas:

I. Identity, relationships and sexuality

   A. Ourselves reflected: a workshop on self-image

   B. Mothers and daughters

   C. Women: sexuality and separate selves

   D. Lesbianism and sexuality

   E. Marriage: experience and institution

   F. Creating a female-defined identity*

II. Women's heritage/women's culture

   A. Heritage (women's history)

   B. Common threads ("How women have made and preserved history and culture")

   C. Lesbian culture

   D. Women's metaphors: visual and verbal

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*All of these workshops were cancelled due to low enrollments.

E. Feminist theater

F. Women's music

G. Women athletes, adventurerers, explorers

H. The "arts skills workshop series" (e.g., sculpture; women's forms; mask ritual tale; journal writing)

I. Ethics for feminists and lesbian feminists

III. Work, politics and economics

A. How money handles women

B. Women: class and money

C. Women and the professions: how to be "in" them and not "of" them

D. Reconsidering* (reassessment of women's involvement with the women's movement)

E. Changing power structures*

F. Political organizing*

G. Lesbianism: a political, sexual and cultural reality

H. Designing non-sexist education*

IV. Physical, emotional and spiritual development

A. Women's wilderness retreat

B. Women relate to the environment: or are we all mother goddesses?

C. Women's spirituality*

D. Recreational weekends

E. How to be your own doctor--sometimes

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*All of these workshops were cancelled due to low enrollments.

V. Miscellaneous

A. Music theory

B. Survival skills* (carpentry. . .)

C. Women and divorce*

Cancellations. Before looking at the ways in which the themes of "challenging myths" and "intentionality" have been incorporated into some of these individual workshops, a few comments are in order regarding the cancellation of workshops. One point is that some of the workshops which have been held have, in fact, had lower enrollments than some of those which have been cancelled. While it would be interesting to know more precisely how the decisions to cancel particular workshops have actually been made, this is beyond the scope of the present study.

One pattern does stand out, however, and is significant in light of the discussion in Section 1 on the "political" character of the Maiden Rock program. That is, the cancellation of workshops which have been more specifically oriented towards political analysis and organizing. The meaning of this pattern is not entirely clear for several reasons. One is the small number altogether which makes it difficult to generalize. In addition, however, the low enrollments and cancellations may be explained by unrelated factors. For example, in terms of the "reconsidering" workshop, several women reported that the registration for that workshop was handled sloppily (e.g., phone calls not being returned) and might have accounted for the problem. The "changing

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*All of these workshops were cancelled due to low enrollments.

power structures" workshop was one of the five-week-long workshops at the farm scheduled during the summer of 1977 of which only one actually ran. The lack of enrollment for the "political organizing" workshops (actually offered twice) was attributed by one Collective member to the ambiguous description in the course brochures.

While all the above explanations seem plausible, and may be correct, it is still interesting to note that more than for any other "subject-related" workshops these have been cancelled. It is also interesting that more than for any other workshops cancelled, the low enrollments have been interpreted by some Collective members as reflecting a lack of real interest. For example, this attitude surfaced in an interview with one Collective member as she talked about the relationship between Maiden Rock and other feminist organizations in the Twin Cities area. She mentioned that some women in a local activist lesbian political organization in the area had criticized Maiden Rock for not offering more "politically oriented" workshops. She explained that some of these women helped to organize such a workshop--"changing power structures"--the previous summer, but it was cancelled. Having expressed her resentment of the "holier than thou" attitude she felt from these women regarding "political purity," she added somewhat self-satisfied that if they couldn't fill a workshop themselves, Maiden Rock shouldn't be expected to do so.

A somewhat similar attitude was expressed by another Collective member during the community forum on Maiden Rock held at the local women's coffeehouse. At that meeting, a woman in the audience said

she would be more interested in Maiden Rock workshops if they had a more "radical political style." The Collective member responded saying that the program had sponsored programs "again and again" on political organizing, but that they hadn't run. "Just to be realistic, who would come?" she asked the woman, and added, "Women are more interested in therapy--looking inside, than they are on the outside. . . . The best we can offer is to do it in a radical political style."

Interestingly, however, no other workshop cancellations seemed to be interpreted in quite the same way, i.e., in terms of reflecting a real lack of interest. For example, during the Collective's discussion of program planning for the summer of 1978 (during my stay), one woman suggested (and was immediately seconded) that the program again offer a workshop on "women's spirituality." The group decided not to offer such a program since a big conference was being held that summer (in another location) on the same issues. What is significant, however, is that a workshop scheduled on that topic the previous summer had been cancelled due to low enrollment. In this case, however, the cancellation was not interpreted as meaning a real lack of interest. The major difference appeared to be that at least two women within the Collective were personally interested in the issues of spirituality, and they were vocal about it. In contrast, no one in the Collective (at the time of the research) seemed to have a strong personal interest in having the program sponsor workshop(s) with a more activist political focus.

Different Collective members spoke with pride about the fact that Maiden Rock sponsored programs which they themselves were interested in

attending. These remarks were intended to convey the strong personal investment the Collective members had in the program. What the comments inadvertently revealed, however, is that the Collective does, in fact, make choices about what to offer based on their own personal concerns. How the Collective interprets the success or failure of any particular workshop also reflects their own priorities and commitments and is not just a matter of actual numbers. These issues are particularly significant to examine since, for a long time, Maiden Rock talked about "discovering" who their audience was, i.e., rather than stating clearly from the start who it was they wanted to reach, the group has taken a more passive position of letting the success of individual workshops determine the issue.[6] Questions regarding who the program attracts and which workshops are considered successful are important to consider and will be raised again in Chapter V.

Myths and intentionality. Returning to the ways in which the themes of challenging myths and becoming intentional are reflected in individual workshop offerings, reference to the course brochures is useful. For example, the description of a workshop entitled "lesbian culture" included the following as some of the key questions the participants would address: "Which of society's myths about lesbians have affected my own life? What are our own myths? How/why should we go about designing rituals for lesbians?" As another example, the workshop on "women related to the environment" was described in the following way:

> Beginning Friday evening, we will explore some myths about women and our relationship to the land and surrounding environment.

> While exploring mythology, we will talk about our own feelings about the land. We will also discuss our feelings about the dominant culture's definition of women as related to the land. On Saturday, we will create our own environment from materials on the farm, and then create our own ritual inspired by the environment and our feelings. This will be a time for women to be together at the farm to redefine our connection with nature.

The workshop which has addressed the idea of myths in perhaps the most literal form has been a workshop entitled "mothers and daughters" offered on several occasions. According to the publicity,

> The workshop will focus on the classical myth of Demeter and Persephone as the initial framework for an examination of the mother-daughter mystery. Some of the feminine experiences constellated by the myth are depression, rape and seduction, jealousy, possessiveness, creativity, and transcendance. Participants will discuss these themes as concept and experience.

As a final example, a workshop on "ethics for feminists and lesbian-feminists" included the following statement in its description:

> Our culture devalues women and women's lives; traditional female virtues, such as self-sacrifice and chastity, are seen as self-effacing and as not promoting a woman's integrity and self-worth. In this workshop, we will discover together, reinterpret and discover alternatives to traditional values and moral precepts. These will help organize and validate our lives as feminists, especially in the areas of work, sexuality and personal relationships.

The examples quoted above are drawn from some of those workshops which most directly incorporate the themes of challenging myths and becoming intentional.[11] However, there are many programs in which these themes are less apparent and less applicable. This is particularly so of the more skills-oriented workshops. Not surprisingly, the themes appear more frequently (though not exclusively) in workshops facilitated by women who have had direct involvement with the Collective,

i.e., those women who have participated in identifying those themes as central to feminist education at Maiden Rock.

On "how" learning takes place: "feminist process."

An understanding of the educational experience at Maiden Rock must go beyond a description of substantive focus. Integral to the meaning of feminist education at Maiden Rock is the concept of "feminist process." Broadly, this idea refers to the way in which learning takes place, i.e., the "how" rather than the "what" of learning. While there is no precise definition of this term, several important meanings emerge. One of these refers to the process of women sharing information from their personal experiences, and then using this information as a way of developing broader understanding of the forces which shape their lives. This meaning is most often conveyed through references to women "telling their stories" and "learning from the inside-out." A second major meaning of "feminist process" is the creation of an environment of mutual trust and support in which teachers and students participate equally in a collective learning process. These ideas are expressed when women talk about the "closer to a support group" atmosphere at Maiden Rock workshops, and the importance of "non-hierarchical" learning. The following discussion focuses on each of these four phrases as a way of elaborating the meaning of "feminist process" within Maiden Rock educational programs.

"Telling their stories." One of the major ways in which Maiden Rock workshops approach the study of women's lives is by having

participants "tell their stories." Within patriarchal culture, women have found themselves isolated from one another and denied the awareness of their common experience. Women's nature has been defined largely by men and what women have thought and felt has been trivialized or ignored. The "culture of silence" among women has reinforced their isolation and has helped to legitimize male definitions of their experience. The process of sharing their stories functions to bring women out of their isolation, to "find their own voices" and to validate female interpretations of their own experience.

Talking about the importance of this sharing, one Collective member quoted the words of the poet Muriel Rukeyser who wrote, "If one woman told the truth of her story, the world would split open." She added,

> I think that's definitely one thing that's feminist--through our own stories--because we've been denied telling our stories. Certainly understanding the politics of our lives through these stories and beginning to see things in a political perspective.

A similar statement of this theme was made by another Collective member as she compared her thinking about feminist education to the ideas of the Brazilian theorist and educator Paulo Freire. She talked about women as an oppressed group living under a dominant male culture in the same way that Freire talked about the peasants in Latin America living under the hegemony of a dominant culture. In both cases, she commented, the oppressed group is denied a true reflection of its own experience within the dominant educational institutions.

> We, like them, are asked not to bring our lives in the school. We're just as oppressed [by the absence of our experiences] in the textbooks. . . . What we know is not considered knowledge. I am oppressed by the modes [of education at the university].

In contrast, she added, at Maiden Rock, the educational enterprise requires that women bring their life experiences to bear on the subject matter.

> Learning is not conceived of as only an intellectual pursuit. No one is asked to check anything at the door. In fact, people are asked to remember as much as they can about their experience and that's absolutely essential, not just peripheral or tolerated or just ruled out.

What participants think and feel as women is given primary importance in the Maiden Rock workshops, and that experience is validated as a legitimate and crucial source of knowledge and understanding.

The importance of sharing from personal experience and of validating women's own understanding of their lives is also based on the awareness that women have been traditionally taught to distrust and devalue their own perceptions. The program recognizes that women themselves have internalized the negative images of the female that dominate within patriarchal culture and come to the program with a reservoir of self-hatred. The theme of unlearning such self-hate appears repeatedly in minutes of the Collective's early discussions about the goals of feminist education. In interviews, this theme was most clearly articulated by one of the facilitators of a weekend workshop specifically focused on the development of female identity. In discussing the issue, she drew from the radicalizing experience she herself had had as a participant in a year-long "women's arts" program sponsored through one of the local colleges.

> The real bottom line for everyone there was our own self-hatred, and that's just something you don't like to talk about or like to think about in our culture. . . . As women, we have internalized

> a lot of shit--a lot of which is cultural that we've put on ourselves that doesn't belong there. Not only in feminist education [but for any feminist endeavor] we need to believe that we're all right and that we do have the power within ourselves to create.

The power of breaking out of silence and isolation and coming to value oneself as a woman within the culture is captured in the comments of one Collective member who was a participant in Maiden Rock's first summer of 1976 program. "It really blew me away. I was so thrilled and excited. . . to start to learn about women and to start to love myself as a woman which I had not done previously." Helping women to "find their own voice," to accept the authority of their own perceptions and feelings, and to recognize the commonality of their stories with those of other women is thus an integral part of the meaning attached to the idea of "feminist process."

Learning from the inside-out. In addition to the more "therapeutic" effect of women "telling their stories," this process is also viewed as a primary way for women to develop broader female understanding of the social conditions of their lives. Sharing from personal experience is not only valued in terms of bringing women out of isolation, but is also seen as the only authentic way of grounding and generating broader social and political understanding of the forces shaping women's lives. Phrases such as "beginning with ourselves," "actualizing what already exists within us," and "learning from the inside-out" are repeatedly used by women involved with Maiden Rock as a way of conveying this meaning. The comments of one Collective member captures the essence of the idea:

> The presumption is that out of the experience we have as women, we really know how the patriarchy works. We understand everything about the system and how it works, and we have the answers for ourselves inside ourselves, at least as applied to, actually to any area that affects women.

While she acknowledged that reading other people's analysis was important for adding breadth to women's understanding, she emphasized that reliance on outside texts cannot replace the knowledge that comes through conscious self-examination of personal experience.

The method of drawing from participants' personal experiences as a way of approaching subject matter was repeatedly described in interviews with women who had facilitated Maiden Rock workshops. For example, a workshop on "marriage--experience and institution" began with participants sharing their feelings and experiences either within marriages, contemplating marriages and/or leaving marriages. In a workshop entitled "common threads" designed "to explore the various ways in which women have made and preserved history and culture," participants were asked to share stories about themselves, their mothers and/or grandmothers. In this case, the personal sharing followed a presentation on the importance of quiltmaking, oral history and women's gossip in understanding women's relation to culture. The experience was described by one of the facilitators as one of the most moving parts of the workshop.

Another illustration of the process of working out from personal experience was evident at the city-based "journal writing" workshop held during the period of the research. At one level, the process could be seen in the presentation of material by the facilitators, both

of whom drew heavily from their own experiences writing journals as a way of setting a framework for the discussion. At another level, participants were encouraged to share from their own journal writing experiences as a source of "material" from which to develop a broader understanding of the significance of journal writing in women's lives. One of the highlights of the Saturday morning session came when one participant offered her interpretation of the meaning of journal writing based on her reflections on the previous night's discussion. She compared the "secretive pleasure" of journal writing which so many participants had described to the experience of masturbation. There was an audible "aha" heard around the room reflecting the appreciation of and confirmation of the insight which was shared.

The idea of learning from "the inside-out" can in some ways be compared to the recently developed university practice of giving "credit for life experience." What is similar in the two ideas is the recognition that everyday life experience can be a source of legitimate and valuable knowledge on par with more academic "book-learning". In the context of feminist education, however, the issue is not just that practical and direct experience is a legitimate source of knowledge. The goal of learning "from the inside-out" is to develop social and political understanding of the conditions of women's lives. The corollary is that the feelings and consciousness which develop from women's direct experience in the world are a critical source of information for understanding the nature of women's oppression; this knowledge has been historically ignored or dismissed as illegitimate. Also, implicit in the meaning of learning from the inside-out at Maiden

Rock is that this must take place in a context with other women in order to generate a collective understanding of the nature of female experience.

Drawing on women's personal experiences as a source of developing social and political understanding has been the cornerstone of feminist "consciousness-raising" groups (Allen, 1970). Within the context of an educational program at Maiden Rock, this approach reflects a more holistic approach to learning. As one facilitator described it, the goal in feminist education is to eliminate the "barriers--lines between the personal and political, the personal and intellectual and the emotional and intellectual--attempting some kind of synthesis." Emphasizing the psychological dimension of this integration, one Collective member similarly commented,

> There's not the same cognitive, emotional, spiritual split that there is in traditional education. The psyche is brought into the cognitive material. It's a more unifying experience than always living up [in one's head]. And we're talking about this experience as applied to areas of academic interest--for example, history--even if we don't use textbooks.

Closer to a support group. Another meaning of "feminist process" which reflects the effort to overcome the compartmentalization of knowledge so characteristic of the formal educational system is expressed in references to the "closer to a support group" atmosphere at Maiden Rock. Such an environment is characterized by a feeling of intimacy, trust and support among participants which allows women to involve more parts of themselves in the learning process.

Facilitators and workshop participants repeatedly made references to the significant degree of personal involvement at the Maiden Rock workshops. This involvement was often linked to the unusual level of trust and intimacy which develops fairly rapidly among a group of relative strangers. Many reported a feeling of "safety" which allows women to take risks--to share of their total selves and to make themselves vulnerable. Reflective of this feeling was the comment made by a participant at the "journal writing" workshop when she said in an oral evaluation, "Today I even felt like sharing. That requires trust and acceptance. The model for that was layed out from the first night." A feeling of mutual support is identified as a central part of this experience. As one Collective member commented, "Support has got to be one of the major [aspects of feminist] style. Really supporting each other. . . . I've never found anything to equal the support that women who are feminist can give to each other."

Another Collective member talked about the high degree of personal sharing present at workshops in terms of the breakdown of traditional barriers between people in a classroom.

> People who come, and I, somehow decide that I'm going to trust these other women. That's crazy in some ways! . . . There's a safety I feel. If I'm in pain, thinking about Demeter and Persephone, nobody's going to leave me there, either because everyone will understand me [or because] I won't hold back that feeling.

The resulting closeness in the emotional physical and/or intellectual contact which women make in such a situation, according to this woman, makes feminist education "messy", i.e., where individuals "lop over" onto one another rather than staying as separate entities--"where the

boundaries between people are less clear." She defined this "messy" quality as the thing which makes critics of feminist education use the negative label "touchy-feely".

The charge that feminist education is "touchy-feely" implies a lack of intellectual integrity and assumes that the educational process "degenerates" into "just" dealing with personal feelings. Much of the humanistic rhetoric of education does reflect an anti-intellectual orientation. It is also true that allowing space for people to respond to personal feelings within an educational setting does risk "getting off the track." Various facilitators commented on the difficulty of achieving a balance of giving personal support while at the same time maintaining a focus on subject matter. In at least some of the Maiden Rock workshops, however, it appears that participants have been able to do both enhancing rather than detracting from the educational experience.

An example of such successful integration was described by one of the facilitators of the week-long "heritage" (women's history) program at the farm. She recounted an interaction which took place the first evening. At that time, the farm manager told the group about the difficult time she was having since she had given up smoking that day; she shared the information to explain her grumpy mood. Spontaneously, three other women in the group described their experiences giving up drug and alcohol dependencies and offered their sympathies and support. According to the facilitator, what was most significant about the exchange was that the group was able to take the time to respond to

personal needs without changing its basic agenda. She commented, "From that first night, it was clear that we could do both, would do both, and did."

"Non-hierarchical" learning. Closely related to the mutual trust and support within Maiden Rock workshops is the feeling of "equality" between facilitators and participants which emerges from the experience of having all program participants collectively involved in shaping the learning process. One of the primary ways in which this mutuality of participation gets expressed is through the reference to feminist education as "non-hierarchical". This idea was expressed in a fund-raising letter sent out by the Collective which stated, "Our experience has been that feminist learning is non-hierarchical and that we as women have much to learn from each other about our culture and our history."

The commitment to the rejection of hierarchical structures has become a cornerstone of feminist rhetoric and ideology, and has roots in the New Lefts' ideals of participatory democracy, equality and community (Freeman, 1976). Within the context of the educational program at Maiden Rock, the concept has several different meanings. Primary among these, however, are: (a) the rejection of a model of education as the transmission of knowledge from those who know to those who don't; (b) the blurring of distinctions between the roles of teachers versus learners; and (c) an emphasis on the importance of each participant's contribution to the learning process.

The rejection of the ultimate authority of teachers was repeatedly referred to by Collective members and workshop facilitators when asked about the distinctive characteristics of feminist education. As one woman commented,

> The whole notion of "one-up, one-down" seems to be basically a patriarchal notion, that is arranged on a hierarchy. To do away with it altogether is difficult. The idea that I can learn as much as a facilitator as persons who are there as participants is fundamental. And learn as much about the content--the subject matter--not just about structure, which you always do. . . . What feels feminist about that is not seeing hierarchy, not seeing one person as the possessor, the dispenser. And that's worked out [in the workshops I've facilitated]. . . . I have a lot of technical knowledge from my education and background. . . but I learn all the time from everyone's personal experience.

The comment of another Collective member and facilitator similarly emphasized the contribution of participants.

> As a facilitator, I learn a great deal from the participant because their experience is valid; their experience is the conveyor of what is learned. Because I've read more books, I bring that aspect of it, but they bring everything else. So it's much more enriching--more exciting.

Many facilitators repeated the theme of the satisfaction they derived from teaching at Maiden Rock. Rather than coming from the feeling of having delivered a brilliant lecture, or having enlightened others, they emphasized the excitement of having been engaged in a mutual learning process. While teachers commonly report that they learn as much or more than their students, this usually refers to the learning that results from preparation and the clarity that is pushed in response to student questions. At Maiden Rock, however, facilitators emphasized the learning which results from what participants themselves

bring to bear on the material on hand from their own perspectives and experiences.

The central importance attached by Collective members to the mutual participation of students and teachers in the learning process was evident in the criticism frequently voiced about one of the Maiden Rock workshop leaders. It was clear that this woman is highly respected and valued, and her workshops were well attended. Yet the Collective members criticized her teaching method--a straight lecture--for "not being feminist" since she did not create space for participants to contribute to the subject matter from their own perspectives. While the substantive issues (relationships between mothers and daughters) this woman addressed were clearly viewed as appropriate to a feminist educational program, the <u>way</u> in which the material was presented was not. In the specific case, because of the stature and reputation of the woman, the Collective was willing to forego "feminist process" for the sake of the substantive issues addressed.

More commonly, however, Maiden Rock programs reject the role of teacher as "dispenser" of knowledge and are structured in ways to encourage women's direct contribution to the substantive issues. Certainly the emphasis on a drawing from women's experiences as a basis for analysis contributes to a more collective educational mode which deemphasizes a "correct line" or "correct" responses. As one woman phrased the approach, "There is an absence of any structure which says that someone has the answer. . . there is no right or wrong philosophy, way of learning. . . . Everyone has a voice."

Several other features of the Maiden Rock program contribute to the greater equality experienced between teachers and students. At the structural level are the voluntary nature of the programs and the absence of external rewards. In addition, the use of co-facilitators and the flexibility of workshop formats also lessen the teacher's authority over students. Finally, the greater similarity in age between participants and facilitators plays a part in equalizing roles.

Voluntary attendance means that women participate in Maiden Rock workshops on the basis of personal interest and commitment. The elimination of grades, credits, and degrees also means, as one woman phrased it, that "People aren't coming to get status; they aren't trying to 'make it' in the system." As a result, there is less investment in honoring the status of formal credentials and roles. This situation also means that teachers do not have the same objective control over students. One facilitator emphasized this point when she contrasted her experience at Maiden Rock with other teaching situations.

> There's a lack of "we are going to force you to learn this because we want you to be the way we want you to be." I'm not doing this because it's going to help me control you. . . . The educational purpose seems to be different. . . . It's not to make you a better citizen. It's not to make you stay under my thumb. It's not to mold you into my definition of who you ought to be. None of these objectives so subtley woven into our traditional educational system seem to be very prevalent in Maiden Rock.

She added that the absence of such hidden goals also contributes to the lack of competition among workshop participants. By eliminating external rewards, one of the primary sources of competition and insecurity among students is removed enhancing the possibility that people will come to learn on more equal footing. Participants may still seek

approval and validation within Maiden Rock workshops, but these must emerge from the relationships one establishes with others rather than on the granting of external rewards.

The use of co-facilitators at most workshops also seems to contribute to demystifying the singular authority of teachers. While there is no explicit policy to have more than one facilitator most workshops do, and many women considered the practice as another way of creating a more collective learning environment. One facilitator talked about feminist pedagogy as a "whole interacting process."

> As we work towards that, we not only have to break down some of the distinctions between teachers and students, but as teachers who are also students and students who are also teachers. Having a collective of teachers, I think, enhances the possibility of moving in that direction; so that we are learning from each other even when we're involved in teaching. . . . [In the workshops I co-facilitated,] I felt as though I learned an enormous amount not only from the other women's knowledge, but also I learned a lot about teaching.

Another dimension of most Maiden Rock workshops which contributes to the ability of participants to take a more active role in shaping the educational experience has to do with the creation of flexible structures. Minutes from the Collective's earliest planning meetings the first year of the program include repeated references to the importance of "emergent structures," "natural rhythms," "openness of structure." When workshop participants talked about this dimension of programs, they referred to both the flexibility to change initial structure and to the opportunity for participants to shape the direction of such change. For example, one woman included this issue when she described what she thought was "most feminist" about a workshop on lesbian

sexuality which she attended. She said, "We weren't much aware of or governed by what felt like artificial structures. For two days, we had a consistent conversation which had its own natural form and natural rhythms. We didn't stay on what was pre-planned." Another woman made a similar comment when she described the creation of a harvest ritual as the "highlight" of a workshop she facilitated at the farm entitled, "Women relate to the environment."

> It wasn't a planned ritual. It was a spontaneous type of thing. I left it pretty loose. I didn't want to plan what they would want to do with it. . . . Even the women who weren't into women's spirituality liked that. . . . When I facilitate I like to be loose enough for people to have input. . . not to have everything planned.

In any educational setting, the degree to which participants get involved in shaping the direction of activities is influenced both by the leader's sensitivity to the desires and needs of the group and by participants' willingness to assume responsibility. Repeatedly, women made references to the readiness of workshop participants to take on an active role. A participant in a workshop on lesbian culture emphasized the latter point saying, "It wasn't so much what the facilitators did, but we all came with that commitment [to become personally involved]." As an example, she talked about the success of a particular exercise at the workshop which was planned by the facilitators.

> It worked just <u>terriby</u> well, I think, because each one of us got personally involved in what we were saying. I think that's one real significant point of feminist education--when people are at the point of coming there at all, they're willing to really put themselves into it. They're not sitting back waiting for "it" to happen. . . . The essential is that [the exercise] could have been mechanical, but it caught fire because of that involvement.

Making a comparison between the city-based and the farm-based workshops which she had co-facilitated, another woman talked about the greater participant involvement which she observed in the latter.

> In the week-long [workshop], partly because of the length and because people had made the decision to be [out there at the farm], there was a higher degree of commitment. They came to devote themselves entirely for a while. [In contrast,] I had the feeling that those at the city workshop came to be told something. It was a momentary night. They didn't drop everything; they weren't expecting to do a lot of work. They expected to be provided with everything.

As the discussion of the impact of the farm in Section 1 suggested, farm-based workshops do involve greater personal commitment on the part of participants. Also, Collective members believe that making the intentional choice to remove themselves from their daily environment is a significant part of the total educational experience. It would not be surprising to find that women who have made the decision to attend an overnight workshop might be more ready and willing to take an active role in shaping the learning experience than those attending the more limited city-based workshops.

Depending on the topic of the workshop and the particular make-up of participants, Maiden Rock facilitators may provide different degrees of leadership in structuring the educational experience. Overall, however, observations at the "journal writing" workshop and reports from facilitators and numerous participants at many other workshops indicate that Maiden Rock workshops are <u>not</u> leaderless or structureless groups. While there is emphasis on shared responsibility, mutual teaching and learning, on the whole, facilitators are recognized as having primary

responsibility for planning basic structure and introducing outside material.

The question of control over structure was raised at the community forum on Maiden Rock held at the local women's coffeehouse during the period of the research. The forum was advertised in advance and about 30 women attended. The purpose of the forum was to have Collective members present to respond to questions and/or criticisms of the program. One woman present criticized Maiden Rock for having the Collective and/or facilitators "arbitrarily" structure the educational programs into weekend, week-long experience, or evening lecture formats. She suggested that the program coordinate the formation of independent study groups in which whatever interested women would meet and decide for themselves how to develop the topic. She pushed Maiden Rock's own ideal that "process is as important as content" to its furthest, i.e., a model of a completely participatory structure in which participants were totally responsible for developing form themselves. In fact, the model of self-structured study groups has been used by feminists across the country. In contrast, Maiden Rock does seek out women with particular skills, experience, and expertise to plan and facilitate workshops.

More typically, Maiden Rock has received outside criticism for not being explicit enough about the particular focus and structure of its educational programs. Such criticism was particularly directed at the brochure advertising the first summer's program for being highly ambiguous for anyone who was not familiar with a particular "humanistic/process oriented" language. From inside the program, criticism of

the rhetoric of "emergent structures" was most fully articulated in the letter of resignation submitted by a former PPG member. In making her point, she referred to the comments she overheard made by some women who had attended a presentation on Maiden Rock held at the university women's studies program. She wrote,

> They said they would not go to Maiden Rock for a week knowing that any one person could call a meeting and change the format at any time. This would allow for some very totalitarian behavior and might even encourage women who get their kicks being disruptive. . . . They would rather know in advance what the basic rules are and assume that everyone who comes is tacitly consenting to those rules.

The women who expressed these concerns were described as "long time feminists" who had had such negative experiences in other feminist groups.

The potential for such manipulation in an "unstructured" group context was perhaps most clearly articulated by feminist theorist Jo Freeman (197) in her article on "the tyranny of structurelessness." Basically, Freeman described the potential for the emergence of informal power dynamics in situations where formal structure was eliminated; this could create a context in which individual women could dominate group process without being held accountable for their behavior. (This issue will be discussed in more detail in the discussion of the Maiden Rock Collective organizational structure in Section 3.) There is ample evidence within feminist experience and literature to substantiate the truthfulness of this analysis.

At the same time, there was no evidence in workshop evaluations or interviews with participants to suggest that such dynamics were a significant problem within Maiden Rock programs. In contrast, there was repeated evidence that participants experienced a positive balance between structure and planning and healthy flexibility, between collective participation and leadership. Comments such as "All of us carried out the structure together, deciding our own direction," "I appreciated the facilitators' ability to provide basic structure and planning but at the same time allowing others to actively participate," "the mutual learning experience for both leaders and participants," are representative of those found in the taped and written evaluations of many of the Maiden Rock workshops. These statements reflect a sensitivity to and appreciation of the shared responsibility and mutual learning which these women experienced. Interestingly, in an interview, the same woman who wrote the resignation letter talked about the positive evaluations she received from a workshop she co-facilitated "because of the casual structure," i.e., one in which the facilitators did not dominate the group.

In order to understand more completely how a creative balance between "openness" and "flexibility" with planning and structure, between "collective participation," and "leadership" would require more extensive participant observation within various educational programs themselves and is beyond the scope of the present research. It is possible that if Maiden Rock workshops were longer and/or involved larger groups of women, that more problems would surface. For the most part, however, the data suggest that a significant number of participants at Maiden

Rock workshops have experienced a positive balance between these dynamics.

The whole question of control over planning, leadership versus collective responsibility is closely related to the issue of "expertise". It has been emphasized in the analysis so far that a central meaning of "feminist process" at Maiden Rock is the belief that each woman has something to contribute to the learning experience; that each woman is encouraged to find "her own voice"--to acknowledge the authority of her own experience rather than relying on external sources. Similarly, the effort to blur distinctions between "teachers" and "learners" reflects the belief that the former have as much to learn from the latter as vice versa. The question arises whether given such emphasis on the equality of participation there is room for acknowledging special skills, expertise, and/or experience.

On one hand, the fact that Maiden Rock is not based on a model of completely self-initiated study groups, but rather on structured workshops with clearly identified facilitators, reflects the program's acknowledgment that some women do have special experience to share. This perspective is reflected in the title of the 1977-78 winter speakers series--the "Wise Women Series: Crones, Harpies, Witches, and Others." As the brochure for the series stated, people were invited "to hear some wise women of our area talk about what they know and how they live and work." Using such a title, the program turns on its head the negative images which have become associated with these figures, redefining them to acknowledge the important knowledge women have historically had.

The tension between the commitment to 'equality' and the recognition of special ability was addressed most explicitly by one of the Maiden Rock facilitators who provided a historical perspective on the issue. She emphasized that the focus on collectivity within feminist education should not obscure the fact that some individuals do know more than others regarding certain kinds of knowledge. She referred to the counter-productive tendency prevalent during the earlier stages of the women's movement to deny any differences in ability, commenting that,

> There was a time when what we wanted to do was pretend that everyone knew the same amount; that there's no such thing as a teacher or an expert, or anything like that. And then it was very hard to conduct any kind of a group because everyone felt illegitimate; you had to pretend either you didn't know things or try to lead without leading, which meant you manipulated or whatever. It's obvious that I've come [to facilitate a Maiden Rock workshop] because I have spent a lot of time learning something, and out of that, I have something to share as well as to learn.

At Maiden Rock, she continued, she had not felt the discomfort of having to "hide" what she knew.

One way of summarizing what the dominant attitude seems to be towards the question of expertise and authority follows. The program respects the special skills, experience and qualifications of individual facilitators. This respect, however, is not based primarily on formal credentials though it may coincide with formal titles and degrees. At the same time, the authority of special ability/expertise is not accepted as a legitimate basis for facilitators to assert unilateral control over the structure, format and direction of the learning enterprise.

Finally, the greater sense of equality between participants and facilitators at Maiden Rock workshops appears to be enhanced by the greater similarity of age between them. The Collective estimates that over 50% of participants are between the ages of 26 and 40. (At the "journal writing" workshop, the range was from 18 to 57 years with a fairly even distribution in between.) Many facilitators commented on the wide age range as a noticeable feature of the Maiden Rock workshops (particularly in comparison to most university courses), and as an element contributing to the richness of the educational experience. As one Collective member who had also taught in a university women's studies program phrased the issue, "At the university, women at 19 think that everything--a career, a husband, etc.--will work out smoothly. Women at 30 don't think that anymore."

Within the past decade, more and more older women have been returning to college, and it is possible that a similar variability in age will become more characteristic of university classes. It is also true that "nontraditional" students often do report a sense of greater equality with professors relative to most undergraduates precisely because of their age and life experiences. Given the intentional efforts of Maiden Rock to blur those distinctions between teachers and learners, this sense of equality may be enhanced. Certainly, the comment made at the end of the "journal writing" workshop by one participant who appeared to be in her late thirties or forties suggested that other factors besides similarity of age contributed to her feeling of being respected and regarded as an equal. She said, "I've been to about five

other workshops [outside of Maiden Rock] and at each one, I felt talked down to. I didn't feel that here at all."

Facilitators.

Before concluding the section on the Maiden Rock curriculum, it is important to talk briefly about the facilitators who ultimately plan and coordinate the specific educational offerings at Maiden Rock. Whether coordinated by the Collective or in the past by the PPG, the general process for selecting workshop facilitators has been the same. After internal discussion leading to the identification of broad topic areas, the program has recruited women known to have relevant skills and/or experience to do the final planning and facilitation of the workshps. Most commonly, the program itself has tried to identify two to three women having different perspectives to co-facilitate the specific offerings.

Neither the Collective nor the PPG ever developed formal criteria for the selection of workshop facilitators and the process has always been one of informal negotiations. There have been certain implicit criteria, however--the bottom line being some kind of commitment to feminism in addition to particular skills or knowledge to share. As Maiden Rock itself described the facilitators in one of their course brochures, they have included:

> Women in higher education, women with many practical skills, women in the professions, women from religious, political and cultural women's organizations. They are women who are making creative choices with their own lives, developing unorthodox skills and knowledge and choosing their own directions.

That Maiden Rock has been able to offer as wide a program as it has over its history has depended on the availability of a large pool of experienced, committed feminists and feminist educators who have been interested in and willing to work within an alternative educational setting for minimal monetary reward (for further discussion of payment of facilitators, see Section 3 on "inadvertent hierarchy").

In spite of the lack of emphasis on formal degrees and titles, the Maiden Rock facilitators have, in fact, been highly credentialed. More than one-third of the 60 or so women who had facilitated workshops at one time or another through the period of the research have been artists, academics or other professionals. Many of these women have also worked with other alternative feminist programs or organizations, e.g., a feminist theater group, a women's carpentry collective, feminist therapy collective, women's centers, feminist art programs, and women's studies.

Most of the "non-affiliated" workshop facilitators, i.e., those who have not had previous involvement with either the Collective or the PPG, have minimal formal contact with Maiden Rock beyond the initial negotiations and final confirmation of workshop arrangements. The major exception to this rule was the scheduling of a facilitators' orientation meeting for all those women involved with the winter/spring 1976-77 workshops. This, however, was the only time such a meeting was organized, and more typically facilitators have had minimal if any contact with the facilitators of other workshops and the program coordinators.

The absence of more formal contacts, however, underestimates the connections between and among different facilitators and Collective and PPG members. In fact, most of the Maiden Rock facilitators have been known personally to at least some (if not all) of the program coordinators and other workshop facilitators through informal friendship networks, joint participation in other organizations and/or common participation in general feminist activity in the Twin Cities area. Many of the facilitators are considered part of the broader "women's community."

In addition, a significant number of the facilitators have led more than one workshop for Maiden Rock. Among Collective and former PPG members, approximately one-half of the women had facilitated more than one, and a handful more than two, three, or four workshops. Among women drawn from the larger community, about one-fourth had facilitated more than one. While the program has brought in new facilitators each season, there has also been a degree of consistency over the years. The degree of continuity, in fact, appears very significant considering the fact that in more than 90% of the workshops actually offered by Maiden Rock through the period of the research at least one of the (co-) facilitators had led more than one workshop.

When asked in interviews about the contact with facilitators, most Collective members self-consciously commented on the limited coordination and expressed the desire to do more collaborative planning with them. Yet, there seemed to be little formal effort to actually do this. In the case of many of the facilitators whom the Collective members knew personally, there seemed to be an implicit assumption of shared approaches.

The issue seems significant since the Collective considers the distinctiveness of the program to follow from their own approaches to feminist education which they have developed collectively through internal discussions. In recruiting women from outside the organization to facilitate, they are asking women to teach who have not been involved in those same discussions. What is interesting to note, however, is the consistency in the reports from different workshop facilitators regarding what they believe to characterize the distinctive features of feminist education at Maiden Rock. It was suggested earlier that facilitators, in fact, do learn from each other (about both content and process) when they have the opportunity to co-teach. This cross-fertilization between Collective and non-affiliated facilitators may contribute to the development of similar attitudes towards feminist teaching strategies. At the same time, the consistency reflects the fact that the ideas about feminist education which Maiden Rock has developed are fundamentally rooted in feminist principles of analysis and organization which are generally shared among feminists.

Summary.

Section 2 of Chapter IV has approached the analysis of the educational program at Maiden Rock from two perspectives. One has characterized the curriculum in terms of the substantive focus of particular workshops as well as central organizing themes linking individual program together, i.e., the goals of "challenging myths" and learning to become "intentional". Primary attention, however, has been given to articulating the fundamental approach to learning, the "how" or "form

and style" of education at Maiden Rock in terms of the concept of feminist process. Feminist process has been characterized as a holistic approach to learning which: (a) incorporates an analysis of women's actual experience as a critical foundation for the development of broader social and political understanding of women's lives; (b) depends on the sharing of such experience within a collective context of other women; (c) requires the creation of a supportive environment in which women feel the trust and intimacy to critically examine the nature of female experience; and (d) fosters a collective model of education in which teachers and students are mutually engaged in shaping the learning experience. The consistency with which these themes emerged from interviews with Collective members, workshop participants and facilitators, from workshop evaluations and through direct observation supports the conclusion that they are defining dimensions of feminist education at Maiden Rock. With the analysis of the curriculum and teaching methods completed, Section 3 turns attention to a structural analysis of Maiden Rock as an alternative feminist organization.

Section 3--Organizational Analysis: Historical Overview and Dynamic Tensions

The purpose of Section 3 is to present an analysis of the alternative organizational structure which Maiden Rock has evolved to plan, coordinate, and administer the Women's Learning Institute educational program. This analysis is divided into four major parts. Part A is

a descriptive historical overview of the development of the organization from its origins in the fall of 1975 through the winter of 1978. Parts B, C, and D each elaborate on one of three central "dynamic tensions" which grow out of the program's effort to put into practice collectivist principles based on the rejection of hierarchical and bureaucratic structures. Part A addresses the tension between the commitment to equality versus the rise of "inadvertent" hierarchy; Part B examines that between the rejection of rigid roles and the requirements of effective organization; and Part C deals with the competition between time devoted to instrumental activity versus that spent on internal "process".

Part A: historical overview of the organization.

By way of background, the following section provides a brief historical overview of the development of the Maiden Rock program. Organizationally, this history has been marked by the transition from a small single collective during the first year of operation to a larger dual structure in the second, and back to a single smaller collective in the third. The present discussion is divided into three sections which parallel those transitions.

Origins--through the first year. Maiden Rock first took formal shape in the fall of 1975 when a group of five women began meeting regularly in the Twin Cities area to set up the structure of an alternative feminist educational program. Before this time, the idea of creating a

"half camp/half learning center" had been discussed informally among a small network of women. However, it was only after the summer of 1975 when one woman bought a farm near Maiden Rock, Wisconsin (one hour from Minneapolis) that more concrete planning began for what was to be called the Women's Learning Institute.

The original Collective was formed on the basis of personal relationships, some of which were very close. Two women were living together; they lived across the street from a third and in close proximity to a fourth. The fifth woman lived out of state, but was a close personal friend of one of the women in the Cities. Each of these women had in the past and/or were currently involved in a combination of professional, political, and social feminist activities. Two were teaching women's studies in university programs and two were founders of a feminist therapy collective. The fifth woman had a private law practice and worked largely with women clients. Among them, the women in the Cities had connections with many area feminists, particularly lesbian-feminists. All of them were "out" or "coming out" as lesbians.

From September through May, the Collective met on a regular basis at different members' homes. During this year, activity was focused on discussing basic philosophy, planning the first summer's program at the farm, fund-raising, and organizing renovations at the farm. Minutes from these early meetings revealed that the Collective also spent considerable time discussing the internal functioning of the group, e.g., changing commitments and feelings about the program, interpersonal dynamics, tensions around decision-making and control particularly with regard to the farm.

During this first year, there was no formal division of tasks or roles. Except for the woman living out of state, each one was involved in an ongoing way with discussion of philosophy, program development, policy-making, administrative and clerical tasks, i.e., each was assumed to share equal overall responsibility for the project. While some tasks were shared by all the women, others were assumed on the basis of personal interests or access to relevant resources, e.g., the lawyer assumed primary responsibility for all legal matters and the farm owner coordinated work on the farm.

In the spring of 1976, the Collective hired two women to work as "cook-managers" for the duration of the summer programs at the farm.[7] These women began to meet with the Collective and later assumed responsibility for coordinating basic maintenance and security at the farm, buying food, orienting workshop participants, and handling contacts with the local community.

The biggest project undertaken by the Collective during the first year was that of converting the huge barn at the farm into a "living/learning" space where workshop participants could sleep, cook, eat, and convene for discussions. This project was financed through personal loans made to the program by Collective members as well as by other feminists in the area. Perhaps more importantly, the renovation itself was carried out by the Collective with the critical assistance of many women from the feminist/lesbian-feminist community in the Twin Cities. These women volunteered their time, skills, and physical labor during the late spring months. Implicit in the appeal made to these women for

assistance was the assumption that the facility would be used to respond to the needs and interests of the broader women's community.[8] The renovation of the barn is considered to be one of the major accomplishments of the program and is referred to with considerable pride by Collective members.

The first summer's program has already been described in Section 2. The only additional information to add here is that altogether, between the two-week and six weekend programs, approximately 65 to 75 women attended. During the summer months, the Collective continued to meet; and most of their energy was directed towards coordinating the various summer workshops. In addition, the Collective planned a limited program of several weekend workshops scheduled for the fall in the Cities.

The second year--1976-1977. By the fall of 1976, the Collective (now including one of the farm managers and minus the original out-of-state member) created a second structure--the Program Planning Group--to assume primary responsibility for basic planning and coordination of the workshop programs. The impetus for setting up the PPG came from two primary places. One was the strong personal interest of one of the key Collective members to involve more "feminist educators" in the planning of the educational programs. As this woman commented in an interview,

> I was the member of the administrative Collective who set up the Program Planning Group. In fact, all the names of the original women in the PPG were women I knew in the Twin Cities who were either scholars or creators whom I liked and respected. So I called them all up and they were all delighted and they all became the Program Planning Group.

Most of these women had either taught at, studied in, or organized other alternative feminist or women's studies programs. According to a former PPG and Collective member, "this group was hand-picked, like the summit meeting!"

It was not only the desires of the individual Collective member which led to the formation of the PPG, although her independent initiative was a crucial factor. All the Collective members felt overworked and over-extended from the full responsibility they had carried the first year. By setting up a second structure, they sought to share the work of developing the program with a larger group of women. As a different Collective member explained,

> We were all nuts in the first place. With [all the interpersonal dynamics we were dealing with], it was too much to try to plan the program and get the farm ready. We decided, "We can't do that again. Let's get some women who are really interested in feminist education and let them do the planning of the program while we would do the administrative part."

In addition to the eight new women recruited to the PPG, two of the Collective members and the women conducting research on the program also joined the group making a total of 11 participants.

From the beginning, the PPG was structured differently from the original collective in terms of responsibilities, composition, and group dynamics. On one hand, the PPG's task was more narrowly defined than that of the Collective. The PPG members had been recruited for the specific purpose of developing the curriculum, and they were accountable to the Collective. They met less frequently--once a month or bimonthly--and were not responsible for overall maintenance or day-to-day decisions of the program.

The PPG also differed in terms of the member profile. This group was larger and more diverse than the Collective in terms of individuals' backgrounds, life style, age, work commitments, and contacts within the Twin Cities feminist movement. Three of the women were not lesbians and two of these were married. There was an age span of about 20 years compared to the approximate 12 year span within the Collective. Some of the women were full-time professionals, but not all were. One woman was unemployed.

While most of the PPG women knew each other in some way, their connections were far more limited than those among the Collective members. Two women were house-mates, but the rest were scattered in various sections of the Twin Cities. One woman commuted several hours to attend meetings. Furthermore, the PPG members did not share the same intense history of having created a new program from scratch, as the Collective had done. Understandably, these women did not have the same kind of primary identification with and investment in the program.

As a result of all of these factors, it appears that the PPG did not experience the same complicated internal dynamics which characterized the Collective much of the time. According to one of the two Collective members who also participated in the PPG,

> The PPG was task-oriented. It saved itself from having the interpersonal disputes. We came, we worked and we left. That's where it began and that's where it ended. . . . We were productive and supportive, and a lot narrower in scope than the Collective.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the second Collective--P P G member who described the greater ease of participation in the second group.

> [I could] just go to the PPG and relax and be a "thinker" along with everybody else. I wasn't dealing with power issues. . . . I especially wasn't dealing with my growing concern about [the lesbian identification of the program]. The PPG was much more congenial to me anyway because it was thinking about curriculum, and that's what I am--a teacher. . . . I've got to figure out how to do all this other stuff.

As described earlier in Section 2, in its early meetings, the PPG essentially began from scratch trying to identify needs of women to which a feminist educational program should respond. As in the Collective, all of the PPG members participated in discussions of philosophy and overall planning, while the specific tasks, e.g., identifying facilitators and making scheduling arrangements for workshops, were divided among them.

During the second year of operation, the Collective continued to meet by itself on a weekly or biweekly basis, and also arranged occasional joint meetings with the PPG. In this period, much of the basic administrative and clerical work of the group was assumed by one Collective member who was on a sabbatical from work and in whose house the program's new office space was located. In addition, a student was hired through an urban internship program to take on part of the clerical work, e.g., answering the office phone, maintaining files, answering mail. The intern also participated in PPG and Collective meetings as another member of those groups.

The results of the PPG's planning efforts were the two major workshop series during the winter/spring 1976-77 and the summer of 1977. Approximately 100 women participated in the first session's workshops which included five weekend programs, one evening and one all-day event

plus one workshop scheduled on Saturdays over a six-week period. During the same time, the Collective coordinated the first winter evening speakers program--the "non-lecture series" schedule over an eight-week period.

As indicated in Section 2, the summer of 1977 program, organized by the PPG, was structured differently from that of the first summer. Instead of the extended two-week format, the PPG scheduled five overnight, week-long programs plus a series of six weekend farm-based workshops. In addition, they planned a "wilderness retreat" weekend and one city-based workshop. Of these total programs offered, only one of the week-long workshops actually ran and six of the other programs with approximately 60 participants altogether.

The original idea of the PPG seemed clear and simple. This structure would enable the program to divide the tasks of curricular planning from overall administration, redistributing the work load, and bringing new perspectives into the program. From the start, however, there was a certain level of ambiguity built in to the two structures regarding questions of ultimate responsibility and control over decision-making. These tensions are examined in more detail under "inadvertent hierarchy" in Part B of this chapter. Suffice it to say here that these conflicts were part of the rationale for returning to a single collective structure by the fall of 1977.

The third year--fall 1977/winter 1978. By the end of the summer of 1977, several women in the PPG decided not to continue working with the program (including one of the women who had also been in the

Collective). Most of these women couched their decisions in terms of being overworked and having alternate priorities. Only one woman indicated that her decision was based on clear differences of politics and personal issues. Given some of the problems which had resulted from the dual structure the previous year, the three remaining PPG women and the four original Collective members agreed to merge into a single Maiden Rock Collective. Once again, one group had full responsibility for program planning and development, policy-making, and administrative work. In addition, the Collective was responsible for all clerical tasks since the student intern had left as well. This was the basic structure with which Maiden Rock was functioning when I arrived in December. Shortly afterwards, however, another student intern was hired.

With the merger of the PPG and the Collective, the group again became more homogeneous and more "enclosed". By the fall of 1978, three women were living together; two more had become lovers and all except one lived in close proximity in Minneapolis (the other lived in St. Paul). All the Collective members were now involved with professional work and only one woman was not "out" as a lesbian. Finally, while there still remained an age range of about 16 years, the Collective now had a sense of itself as an "older" group.

In the fall of 1977, the Collective decided to limit its programming for the season in order to develop the program goals and philosophy further and to consolidate the new "collapsed" structure. (Only one all-day workshop actually ran; another had been scheduled, but was

cancelled because of confusion around the registration procedure.) In addition, the Collective established a number of ongoing administrative "task groups"--comprising one to three people each--e.g., for publicity (mailings), fund-raising, and maintenance of a national mailing list. Part of the reason for setting up such groups was to encourage the participation of women who might want to work with Maiden Rock but without becoming full Collective members. The only example which actually worked in this way, however, was that of a former PPG member working on the publicity group with two Collective members.

Another significant change within the Collective was that one woman who had been centrally involved in writing a grant the previous spring to the State Arts Board (which was received) was being paid to coordinate an "arts skills workshop series" of nine weekend programs. This series was the basic workshop program for the winter/spring 1977-78 season. This was the first time that one person within the Collective was primarily responsible for the coordination of a major component of the educational program. It was also the first time that a Collective member was paid for doing such administrative work.

In addition to the more clearly delegated administrative tasks, the Collective continued to operate on a flexible model of allocating responsibility. Some work, e.g., office responsibilities and chairing meetings continued to be rotated among the different women. Other work was shared simultaneously by all members, for example, the planning and coordination of the second winter evening speakers series (this year entitled the "Wise Women Series"). Finally, individuals continued to

assume responsibility for work on an ad hoc basis. In addition to the coordination of the workshop series and the Wise Women speaker series, during the period of the research, a major portion of the Collective's time was directed towards the intitial stages of program planning for the coming summer 1978 season.

Summary. The overview has presented a broad sketch of major developments in the organizational structure of the Maiden Rock program from its origins in the fall of 1975 through the period of the research in the winter of 1977-78. The description has emphasized issues of group membership, size, organizational form, and division of labor, highlighting the transitions between single and dual structures. The following three sections (Parts A, B, and C) present a more critical analysis of the kinds of internal tensions and contradictions which have characterized the organization in its evolution through these different stages.

Part B: contradictions in equality: the rise of "inadvertent" hierarchy.

Fundamental to the Collective's sense of itself as an alternative feminist institution is its commitment to non-hierarchical principles of organization, most evident in the participatory structure of the Collective itself and in the equal pay scale for facilitators. While Maiden Rock has eliminated much of the formal basis of unequal rewards, status and power, and in spite of commitments to egalitarian relationships, "inadvertent" forms of hierarchy have continued to surface creating a source of stress within the organization.

The following section looks more specifically at the contradictions between the commitments to "equality" and the manifestations of unequal influence and control at two distinct levels: (a) structurally, in relation to the non-teaching paid staff positions and the PPG; and (b) informally, in terms of the hierarchy of personal status and influence among individuals. Before examining these issues, however, the discussion briefly considers reflections of the program's commitment to non-hierarchy in terms of the organization of the Collective itself and the payment of facilitators.

The Collective is organized around the principle that each woman should have an equal voice in making those decisions which affect her and the program. Therefore, each woman participates in major decision-making and shares in the overall responsibility for the program. Decisions are made on a consensual model and no individual has formal power or status over any other. Furthermore, as a voluntary organization, the Collective has no formal system of unequal reward for different individuals' participation.

While participation in the Collective (also within the PPG) has been voluntary, Maiden Rock has consistently followed the practice of paying women for facilitating workshops. This has been true for both Collective members and women drawn from the larger community. While there has been disagreement within the Collective regarding the question of "how much" facilitators should be paid, all members support the basic policy of paying all women according to a single standard. That is, while the scale of payment may be different for an evening

speaker versus a weekend workshop facilitator, all women doing the same kind of work are paid on an equal basis. For example, during the time of the research, all women were paid either $37.50 for co-facilitating a city weekend workshop or $50.00 if they were solely responsible. In a similar way, all of the women participating in the "Wise Women" speakers series would be paid on an equal basis. Essentially, the program rejects the principle of paying people more money because of formal titles or credentials.

Even with regard to this straightforward policy of payment of facilitators, however, the Collective has found itself contradicting its own policy of "non-hierarchical" reward in exceptional cases. The one major example of this inconsistency surfaced during a discussion of payment of facilitators at one of the Collective meetings held during the research period. The discussion opened when one woman repeated a rumor she had heard, that a woman who had previously facilitated several workshops was no longer willing to work for the program because of the low facilitator fee. This comment led to a discussion of the program's payment policy, including the frequent debate over whether or not Maiden Rock could afford to offer "competitive" fees. By the end of the discussion, it was agreed that the Collective should raise the base fee scale for all workshop facilitators in order to come closer to "paying women what they're worth."

It was during this discussion that one of the Collective members referred to the major exception the group had made in its policy of equal payment in the case of one of the former workshop facilitators.

This woman is highly respected within both the broader women's community and her professional field. Apparently, the Collective had offered her significantly more money than usual because of her reputation. The Collective member who raised the issue argued that such a practice contradicted the group's commitment to non-hierarchy by reinforcing the unequal value attached to formal credentials. By the end of the discussion, the Collective accepted the self-criticism and decided not to repeat the policy in the future, i.e., if the same woman was asked to facilitate again, she would be offered payment on the usual fee scale.

The case described above was more of an exception than the rule, and there was little disagreement regarding its resolution. The example illustrates, however, that even in the clear-cut policy of payment for work, the Collective has found itself acknowledging that certain women's time may be more valuable than others, i.e., the principle that ultimately hierarchical structures are built on. The following discussion of the "inadvertent" hierarchy which has developed structurally and informally within the organization highlights the more subtle levels at which unequal power relations "intrude" upon theoretical principles of equality.

Structural hierarchy: paid staff and the PPG. In addition to the facilitators, the Collective has hired women to fulfill two specific positions, i.e., the farm "manager/cooks" and the "student intern." In the case of both positions, the relationships between the women hired and the Collective have widely varied based on the personal characteristics of the individuals. Also, in both cases, conflicts

between the Collective and certain of these individuals have developed to the point where individuals left the positions prematurely. Beyond issues of individual personalities, both the farm manager and intern positions have suffered from a built-in contradiction. On one hand, the positions have been defined through explicit job descriptions with specific responsibilities and have been held "accountable" to the Collective. On the other hand, the Collective has wanted the individuals filling these roles to operate independently with minimum, if any, supervision. At this level, the individuals have been considered equal members of the Collective.

Minutes from meetings at the end of the first summer's program indicated that tensions had developed between the Collective and one of the farm managers over the issue of autonomy. As the woman who had been doing research on Maiden Rock during the summer was recorded saying to the Collective, "[You] wanted to hire someone who would operate independently, but then felt angry when she didn't follow your directions."

The contradictions in the student intern position are more glaring because of the nature of the work responsibilities (i.e., low status clerical work) as well as the student status of the individuals filling the position. More than the farm manager role--which has had a rather wide latitude in terms of responsibilities--the student intern has been held most accountable to the Collective in a subordinate way. The comments made by the intern who began work during the period of the research project reflected this situation. At one of the Collective

meetings, she expressed feeling on the periphery of the group, isolated and lonely. At that point, she had only been working with the Collective for a very short time and this was part of the issue. There was also a clear difference between her personal style and that of the other Collective members. In talking about her feelings, however, the intern shed light on the objective status of the position when she said she would like to get to know the Collective members "not as employers, but as people." The gap between this woman and the other Collective members was not only one of age and personal style, although those were clearly part of the problem. More objectively, the intern position was structurally the most "employee-like" and involved the rather unrewarding and isolated clerical work in the office.

In the case of workshop facilitators and even the farm manager, payment for work reflects a positive valuing and recognition of the work women have contributed to the program. Given the minimal payment these women have actually received, the money is less a wage than a token of gratitude, i.e., some material acknowledgement of the work they have done. In contrast, the payment of the student intern has more clearly reflected an employee-employer relationship in which the intern works for rather than with the Institute. Many work collectives have redistributed basic clerical work in order to avoid such a consequence. Maiden Rock has also done this to some extent, but has not rejected the intern position as inherently contradictory to its collectivist principles. However, the reality has been a more hierarchical relationship between the student interns and the Collective. Comments made by several Collective members indicated that, in fact, the group

had a hard time making demands on the first intern they hired because of their ambivalence in treating her as an employee rather than an "equal". Since the period of research, yet another student intern began to work for the Collective, and apparently many of the tensions which previously characterized the position were eliminated. Maiden Rock managed to find someone who could take on the work independently, and who was able to integrate herself as a more equal member of the Collective structure. Such a positive situation, however, seems to have resulted more from the special aptitudes and characteristics of the individual intern than from the objective structure of the position itself.

In addition to the contradictions inherent in the non-teaching paid staff positions, another source of "inadvertent" hierarchy at the structural level resulted from the creation of the PPG. Here, too, contradictions were built into the very foundation of the program, in this case resulting from ambiguities regarding ultimate responsibility and decision-making power. While the Collective was enthusiastic about bringing a new group of women in to assume major responsibility for developing the curriculum, there was also resistance to relinquish actual control over the program. Reflecting on the Collective's ambivalence, one member commented in an interview, "We went a little nuts [after creating the PPG] because we didn't really want to let go of the whole thing. So [two of the Collective members] joined the PPG on a permanent basis."

The Collective's ambivalence in this issue was evident in some of the mixed messages it gave to the PPG regarding that group's actual autonomy. A tape from the first PPG meeting records one of the Collective members telling the new PPG women that, "Because [Maiden Rock] is not a normal hierarchical structure, it won't operate with our going to the Collective [with some idea] and they're saying we can't do it." At the same time, a memo to the PPG from the Collective indicated that in cases of conflict between the two groups, the Collective would have ultimate say since those women had been "thinking about the Institute longest." In an interview, the same Collective member quoted above explained the group's position in terms of their having felt ultimately responsible for the program. As she commented, "We were the ones who were going to pay the bills, who were going to raise the money. [The PPG members] were the 'thinkers', but they didn't have to make the thing go around."

Interviews with former PPG members indicated that most of the women were not concerned about the distinctions which were made between the two groups when they first joined the program. As the year progressed, however, there was an increasing lack of clarity and discomfort regarding actual spheres of responsibility and decision-making. According to one of the Collective members, "It really got to be 'us' and 'them'. . . . There was a lot of unclarity about who was supposed to do what." Similarly, one of the former PPG members commented, "What wasn't a good idea was creating two different structures that didn't really understand each other. . . . Sometimes decisions happened and you didn't know quite where they happened."

The tensions between the two groups came to a head around the printing of the course brochure for the winter/spring 1978 program which the PPG had planned. Many of the PPG members felt angered and confused by the brochure and the criticisms centered on two major issues: (a) what they thought was an irrelevant and confusing introductory statement and (b) what they perceived as a hierarchical placement of the photos of the PPG, the Collective and the student intern; the picture of the Collective was the largest and that of the intern was placed at the back of the brochure. The PPG members were particularly annoyed at the introductory statement since they felt it neither reflected their own commitments nor the real rationale behind the development of the program.

At a joint meeting held with the two groups to discuss the criticisms, it became apparent that no one was committed to the opening statement and that it had been selected rather haphazardly. What was more significant, however, were the questions raised about who should be responsible for what work, and who should have the "final say" over the brochures. As a former PPG member explained in an interview,

> We decided that the PPG had to have control over how the programs themselves fit into some overall vision, and that we had to write the introduction. We couldn't just turn it over to the Collective since they weren't involved in the process that developed the program. That was the big issue. . . [at the beginning of the meeting] there were some hard feelings that the PPG was encroaching on the Collective's turf.

In discussing alternative ways of writing subsequent brochures, the PPG members made it clear that they did not want an arrangement whereby they would need to seek the "approval" of the Collective; they

wanted to have a direct and equal role in creating a brochure which would reflect their planning efforts.

The PPG's criticism of the placement of the photos spoke to the same issues of status and control. They had been responsible for virtually all of the program planning, yet they believed the placement of the photos suggested they were working under the direction of the Collective. The tape of the joint Collective PPG meeting at which these criticisms were aired reveals that the Collective members were genuinely disturbed by the PPG's interpretation of the photos and had not consciously intended to create such an impression. It was not that the Collective had deliberately manipulated the photos in order to assert it's authority. However, the placement of the photos unconsciously reflected the Collective's feeling that they indeed were the ones with final control over the program.

When asked about the significance of the return to a single collective in the third year, most of the current Collective members made reference to the unequal power which had existed between the two structures. One woman's comment was representative when she said,

> In a general sense, I think what we did was give up vestigal hierarchy. Because there was a vestigal hierarchy. Decisions did all have to come before the Collective. . . . That just got to feeling like a board of directors. . . . It just felt too patriarchal and too traditional. So, I think that we just all feel delighted, especially [the original Collective members] because now everybody is equally responsible for the ideas and the management and that seems more feminist. We're not identically responsible--for example, J. does the books--but we're equally responsible for the entire enterprise and that feels a lot more comfortable.

In interviews with Collective and former PPG members, women readily acknowledged that an "inadvertant" hierarchy had developed as a result of the creation of the dual organizational structure. In hindsight, the ultimate control which the Collective had justified on the "reasonable" grounds that they had been around longer and shouldered final responsibility for the program was considered antithetical to the feminist commitment to non-hierarchy. The elimination of the PPG as a separate group is considered to have put all the women on an equal footing within the organization.

Personal status and informal hierarchy. The discrepancy in the power and control exerted by the PPG versus the Collective became most apparent in specific conflicts over decision-making. Less obvious, however, have been the informal criteria which have resulted in different individuals exercising varying degrees of influence within the program. As Freeman (1976) pointed out in her critique of the feminist "structureless" groups, the absence of positions of formal power within an organization does not prevent--and often masks--the development of informal elites and status hierarchies. Informal leadership within such structureless groups is often based on access to resources and/or personal characteristics, e.g., age, education, life style, sexual preference, and general attractiveness. In the case of Maiden Rock, age, sexual preference, stature within the larger lesbian-feminist community, personal attractiveness as well as access to time and material resources have been the basis of differences in the power and influence different individuals have had within the organization. In actuality,

the position of any single woman has been determined by a combination of these characteristics as well as more idiosyncratic traits. For the sake of the analysis, however, these will be examined separately as a way of understanding their influence over organizational dynamics.

Age. One theme which surfaced repeatedly during the course of the research was the significance of the age of the Collective members. The average age of the current Collective women is about 37 or 38 years; three of the women are 40 or older and the youngest is 29. The significance attached to age surfaced at the first contact with the Collective in Minneapolis. At that time, one of the older women talked about her age as a factor explaining the "sustaining energy and sustaining vision" which underlay her commitment to the development of the program. The respect for age among Collective members is often talked about in terms of an appreciation of the difficulty of surviving "in the patriarchy" as a strong woman, committed to struggling against women's oppression.

The premium placed on age is largely reinforced by the older women in the Collective, and somewhat circularly, it is their very stature which gives weight to its importance. At the same time, younger women who have been involved in the program have shared some of the same respect for the experience of the older members of the Collective. This sentiment was most directly expressed by one of the younger former PPG members when she described her original interest in working with the program. "I was especially excited about working with the women in the Collective. They were older, had survived--and that's really important.

I felt I could learn from them. They had dug their heels in and that's what I think a revolution is made of."

Two of the older women ("A" and "B"),[9] in particular, projected self-satisfied feelings about the older profile of the group and attributed certain organizational conflicts to the "lesser maturity" of some of the younger women. In an interview, "B" commented that from the earliest stages, some of the women had felt reluctant to include anyone under 30 years old in the Collective. Their attitude, she explained, was that "people beyond 30 are feeling a little bit settled about their lives"; she added, "We could have saved ourselves a lot of difficulty."

"A" also referred to age as a way of explaining a tense incident which she believed was the "final straw" leading to the resignation of one of the PPG members. The incident occurred at a PPG meeting during the second year in the context of a discussion regarding whether or not to select a particular woman to facilitate a proposed workshop. After a discussion of this woman's many "impressive" qualifications, one of the younger PPG members, "C", asked if the woman was a lesbian --as though that were a final criterion to consider. Highly critical of the timing and tone of the younger woman's comment, "A" said she felt it was particularly insensitive to the non-lesbian women in the PPG and essentially irrelevant to the decision. She expressed particular criticism of the younger woman's tendency to discount the important contribution of women who were not lesbian-identified. She added,

> I really do think [that attitude] is a function of age. I think that [the older women in the group] know that there are not enough

> good women around to exclude anyone. Even if we were into excluding, it's not feasible yet! We know because we take a longer look at things. . . . I think longevity is terribly valuable; it's terribly hard to still be functional. I think there's something to [age], especially in a women's group.

The underside of some of the younger women's respect for and appreciation of the older women's experience, however, was the feeling that younger women were not taken as seriously within the organization; that it was harder for them to have their opinions listened to. As one of the younger women commented while discussing her role within the organization, "I have to work real hard to be respected. . . . There's a lot of premium put on age. . . . I feel I have to really fight for my ground because of my age. . . . I don't feel my words are taken as seriously." She had had particularly tense relationships with two of the older women in the group, though moreso in the earlier stages of the organization. Her conflicts with one of them, however, were largely the product of personal relationships external to the group. To single out age as the primary source of conflict between them would be a major oversimplification.

That the issue of age was also cited by other younger members of the Collective, and the PPG suggests that, indeed, age was a determinant of women's status within the organization. For example, talking about her hesitation in asserting her thoughts and feelings within the Collective, one of these women (who did not have other personal conflicts with the older members) explained in an interview that, "I'm one of the younger ones." Specifically, she talked about the intimidation she had felt in relation to some of the older women after the merger of

the PPG and the Collective. This feeling had reached the point that, earlier in the year, she had considered leaving the group because of self-doubts as to whether or not she had "something to contribute."

Sexual identity. The particular esteem with which three of the older Collective women are held is not only a function of age; it is also a result of their status as older lesbians, and perhaps more importantly, lesbians who are publicly "out". These women are particularly respected because of the personal risks involved in taking a public position as a lesbian; and this factor explains the repeated references to their visibility and power within the broader women's community. In the words of one Collective member, "'A', 'B', and 'D'. . . are the leading lesbians in the Twin Cities that are open in public and all that. . . . Almost anything that 'A' does for Maiden Rock is guaranteed to go. . . . I think that 'B' and 'D' [have a similar influence] in the community."

The importance of the lesbian issue, in addition to age, in explaining the stature of these women is made clearer in light of the fact that the oldest Collective member, who was not out as a lesbian, was not perceived in quite the same way. This woman made the point herself in the context of describing the nature of a conflict which had developed between the three other older Collective members and certain members of the lesbian-feminist community. According to this woman,

> There was some discussion at a meeting about people feeling jealous of "A", "B", and "D"--about their not making themselves enough available to the [lesbian-feminist] community. . . . I was interested in my very peripheral [position in all this]. I haven't been as involved with the lesbian community. . . but all sorts of things that were resented about "A", "B", and "D" could have been

> resented about me too. But because I wasn't as visible a part of the lesbian community, I wasn't included [in the criticism].

It was true, that this woman's name did not surface in the same way as the others, when women interviewed talked about the most influential members of the Collective. (Interestingly, since the time of the research, this woman has come out as a lesbian; and it would be interesting to know how her status may have changed.)

The interaction within the PPG described earlier as the "last straw" leading to the resignation of one of the PPG members raises the question of the relationship between lesbian and non-lesbian women within the Collective. Most of the Collective members would say that they are open to any woman who is interested in working with them regardless of sexual orientation. The reality, however, has been that very few of the Collective and PPG members have not been lesbians. One Collective member referred to the "token non-lesbian" women, adding that some of them had eventually "come out" during the course of their involvement with the program. The same woman talked about her personal concern that the lesbian issue had influenced the decision of at least one of the PPG members to leave the group. As she explained the situation, it was not that these women felt uncomfortable within the group, but "just different--somehow as though they weren't as involved in the decision-making."

From all accounts, it appears that there have not been explicit conflicts between lesbian and non-lesbian women in the Collective and the PPG. Yet, evidence suggests that the two PPG members who left (who

did not define themselves as lesbians) did feel "somehow apart" from the other women on at least some occasions; and that lesbian identity had become an informal criterion of acceptability for certain women. Commenting on this issue in the resignation letter referred to above, the former PPG member wrote:

> Another thing that sets me apart from most of the planning group is my sexual orientation. This need not be a problem and I hate to see it as one because I've never considered it very important. . . . Yet, even though I certainly don't identify myself as a "heterosexual woman," I think that's been a sore point for some people. The only question that's been consistently asked about people interested in joining the planning group is "C's", "Is she a lesbian?".

Even this woman emphasized that much of her feeling of separateness from the rest of the planning group was rooted in differences of political perspective rather than in issues of sexual orientation. Though it might be asked how possible it would be to fully separate the impact of each on her experience within the program.

The other non-lesbian woman who left the PPG, while noting her discomfort with being labelled at all in terms of sexual identity, also indicated in an interview that she would never have left the group solely because of issues of sexuality. At the same time, however, minutes from the Collective meeting when the group discussed the resignation letter record this same woman acknowledging that she had "often felt like an outsider." In response to her comment, the minutes also record one of the lesbian Collective members making an emphatic statement that she could not understand how this could be given the historic pattern of lesbians having been excluded by heterosexual women. She

added that she did not want Maiden Rock to repeat such behavior in reverse. In spite of her protest, the reality seemed to be that certain informal dynamics had developed which created a feeling of separateness among the women who were not lesbian-identified. It is just such "stuff" that informal hierarchies are made of.

Access to resources. In addition to the personal characteristics mentioned above, another informal criterion which has affected individuals' power within the group has been access to material resources and time. One of the most important resources the program has had access to has been the farm used for the summer programming. The private ownership of the farm, however, has been a source of significant tension within the Collective, particularly during the second year of the program's operation.

In principle, the whole Collective shares responsibility for Maiden Rock's use of the facility. Minutes from Collective meetings during the first and second year, however, include many references to the owner's feelings of resentment and vulnerability because of the Collective's "encroachment" on her control of the farm. At one meeting, she was recorded stating that she felt she should, in fact, have a greater voice in decisions regarding the farm because of her greater investment in it. Ambiguity regarding actual control of the farm was apparently also experienced by women in the community who had contact with the program. In particular, one woman interviewed referred to the confusion of many of the women who had assisted with the barn renovation project as to whether the farm was individually or collectively

owned and controlled. (This issue is discussed again in Chapter V in terms of tensions between Maiden Rock and the larger women's community.)

At different points, the Collective has discussed the possibility of assuming full collective control/ownership over the farm, but no concrete steps have ever been taken in this direction. As the program has come to place more emphasis on the city-based workshops, the farm issue seems to have become less a focus on contention, and less of a basis for playing out power dynamics within the Collective. Still, the owner continues to have ultimate power over decisions regarding the farm, to the extent that she chooses to exercise them. To the extent that she hasn't used this power, she has willingly relinquished individual authority to collective responsibility.

In a somewhat parallel fashion, "A" has exercised greated control within the group because of the location of the program's office in the basement of her home. While she has volunteered the space for collective use, she still has a greater say over its use since it is in her house. For example, during the research period, "A" made it clear at one meeting that she did not want the new intern (who would be working in the office) to have access to the rest of the house--including the bathroom. This restriction created an awkward working condition since there was no other facility nearby; and the intern had mentioned the problem to another Collective member. No one questioned the Collective member's right to maintain the privacy of the rest of her house; but her decision clearly created a problem for the entire group. As it turned out, at a subsequent meeting, another Collective member insisted

that the group consider installing a portable facility for the sake of the intern, and eventually, this is what the group did. The incident illustrates, however, the kind of power which can follow from control over resources.

At a more intangible level, access to time has been another source of informal power within the Collective. This dynamic became particularly exacerbated during the second year when "A" took a sabbatical from work and devoted a major portion of her time to work for Maiden Rock. Without receiving any compensation, she assumed many of the clerical and some of the administrative responsibilities of the Collective which, at one level, was greatly appreciated and recognized as an important contribution to the program.

At the same time, however, resentments began to build up in the group as "A's" assumption of additional responsibility began to be interpreted by some as taking over more control of the program. From the other direction, she began to feel that she was shouldering the burden of the program's work and felt resentment at others for not "carrying their load." One woman in particular described the kind of guilt she commonly felt as a result of the situation saying,

> "A" was extremely anxiety-ridden--feeling very responsible, very dedicated and very alone. You know, working, working, working. . . . Whether she directly addressed me or not, I still felt she was the one shouldering the major amount of the responsibility and we were being coerced, panicked, shamed, badgered into helping her.

Other interviews indicated that similar, if more moderated perceptions, were shared among other Collective members. Even though "A" assumed

additional responsibility voluntarily, other women felt certain pressures to meet her standards and expectations.

It is important to mention one other factor which has affected the status different individuals have held within the organization; this has to do with having particular skills and/or experience considered especially relevant and important to the program's development. It has already been noted that many of the women who have been involved with the planning and coordination of Maiden Rock have been highly skilled and credentialed professionals of one sort or another, e.g., therapists, educators, a doctor, lawyer, and artists. One of the ways in which special ability is used is through the role of facilitator of Maiden Rock workshops and this seems to be one area where special skills are fully appreciated and individually recognized.

Two women, however, "A" and "D", were most often identified by Collective members as having particularly valuable skills to offer the program in an ongoing way. "D's" importance was often phrased in terms of her ability to facilitate discussion around internal group dynamics; and she had come to be refered to as the "process" person within the Collective. In addition to having initiated the practice of personal sharing (see Part D for a fuller discussion) considered central to the group's process, she often assumed the role of "facilitator" at points of particular conflict. One clear example of this occurred at a Collective meeting held during the time of the research. At the end of the meeting, one of the other Collective members--"E"--indicated that she felt her opinion (regarding the payment of facilitators) had been

disregarded the previous week; that she was not being taken seriously in terms of an issue about which she felt strongly. Very quickly, "D" began to question "E" further, trying to get her to articulate her feelings--particularly her anger--more fully. While this was going on, all of the other Collective members sat silently letting "D" direct the discussion towards a clearer resolution. While at other times different Collective members have mediated conflict within the group, "D" seemed to be especially regarded for assuming this kind of role; and there was a certain power in this role in terms of influencing the group's functioning.

In a similar way, while numbers of women in the Collective and the PPG have been teachers/academics, "A" was most often referred to as the "real educator." A former director of a women's studies program and university professor, she more than others had a wider reputation as a "feminist educator" and was clearly valued for her ideas about feminist education and her special teaching talents. As various people noted, any workshop that "A" facilitated would be sure to have a significant enrollment.

The skills of other women have clearly been very important to the program at different points in its history, e.g., the lawyers' legal knowledge around the zoning problems at the farm, the farm owner's building skills for the barn renovation project. However, in an ongoing way, certain skills and experience have been considered fundamentally important to the program's success and those who have them have appeared to have greater influence within the group.

It should be clear from the analysis so far that on many dimensions, "A" held particular status and influence. Repeatedly, she was singled out by Collective and PPG members as a powerful, if not the most central, individual in the program. Although she was uncomfortable admitting to this influence because of the conflicts which have also surrounded this role as well as the questions it raised about the full "equality" of all the Collective members, other women in and out of the program clearly saw her in a leadership position. She was described variously as "the one who has the real vision," the "heart" of the program, and the one with "the real dream of a 'women's learning institute of the midwest.'" She herself, in an interview referred to Maiden Rock as "the resting place of my dream," while explaining her fundamental commitment to and investment in the future of the program. Finally, in addition to her vision and commitment, her access to resources, special skill as an educator and elevated status as one of the older "public" lesbians, her central role in the organization is reinforced by a particular personal attractiveness and "presence" which draws people to her.

The Maiden Rock women are sophisticated enough about group process to recognize that they play out different roles within the organization; and Collective members are ready to admit to some of the interpersonal tensions which have interfered with the group's effectiveness. Explicit discussion of these roles and power dynamics have surfaced at different points in the program's history. During the second year, the Collective actually went to a therapist/consultant to try to clarify what these dynamics were.

In interviews and at Collective meetings, references to these internal dynamics were often couched in terms of distinctions between such roles as "task leader" versus "process person," "thinker" versus "organizer". While appreciation was expressed for individuals who assumed some of these functions, various women also talked about the desireability of being able to be more flexible in terms of which individuals assumed which roles as a way of broadening different individuals' "repertoires". Some of the distinctions in the position of different individuals discussed in the preceding analysis, however, go beyond different "types" of contributions and touch on issues of unequal influence and control.

In their study of alternative community mental health programs, Holleb and Abrams (1975) made a distinction between a "hierarchy of power" versus a "hierarchy of influence." In many of the alternative programs they studied, they discovered an acceptance of a "hierarchy of influence" based on individuals special skills, or length of time in the organization. They argued that an influence hierarchy is inevitable in any organization given the presence of individuals with different experience and ability. Within Maiden Rock, the Collective members have accepted a certain "inequality of influence" based on individuals' experience, knowledge and commitment to the organization, without setting up <u>formal</u> differentiations of status and power. As the analysis above has indicated, however, at different points, different individuals have felt anger, resentment, and/or intimidation in response to the greater control which certain women have exercised within the organization.

Because the Collective is committed to an ideal of equality among all of its members, the presence of power dynamics, "even within a feminist group," is difficult to acknowledge. As one Collective member commented, "I think we have a belief that there aren't power dynamics in the group. I'm coming to believe that less. I think there are real power things. . . . But we avoid them." The Collective has never formally tried to restructure power dynamics within the group, although they have in the past discussed such issues. More commonly, the way in which these have been approached is by identifying such dynamics and leaving it to individuals to try to change the patterns which have developed. An illustration of this approach was evident in the comments made by "A" at one Collective meeting when she found herself assuming the position of having pushed the group through its agenda, to the point where at least one woman had felt herself cut short. In defending herself, "A" remarked, "I was in the seat tonight. . . . But I've not been playing that role in this Collective for a long time--through purpose, through effort and through work of mine." In spite of that effort, however, she again found herself in a dominant role within the meeting.

Summary. As the preceding analysis has indicated, in spite of commitments to principles of equal participation and control over resources and decision-making, "inadvertant" hierarchy has developed within the organization creating sources of tension and dissatisfaction. At the structural level, contradictions have been built into both the student intern and farm manager positions and into the status of the

PPG. In terms of the paid staff positions, the Collective has been ambivalent, on one hand, wanting the individuals filling those roles to function independently and as equals with the Collective members, but at the same time holding them ultimately accountable to the Collective. Whether or not these contradictions have surfaced as explicit tensions has depended more on the personal characteristics of the individuals than the objective structure of the roles themselves.

Similar ambivalence about autonomy versus accountability characterized the creation of the Program Planning Group. While the two groups worked together smoothly for a certain period of time, ultimately the lack of clearer mutual definition regarding which group was responsible for what kinds of decisions led to confusion and conflict. While the participation of two of the Collective members on the PPG provided an ongoing link and informal communication between the groups, the role of these women was never formally clarified. Ultimately, these women felt "split" between the two groups and the PPG members felt they did not have final control over their own planning efforts.

In addition to these structural contradictions, this section has analyzed the informal hierarchy of influence and control among individuals within the organization which has also developed. While in principle each woman is to have an equal voice in decision-making, in fact, some voices have been "louder" and more powerful. To the extent that greater influence has been the result of individuals' special experience and/or skills, this has been accepted willingly by the Collective members. When this greater influence has been based on more "external"

characteristics, not openly acknowledged and legitimated, certain individuals have felt themselves "less equal" within the organization.

Part C: the division of labor.

Part B characterized one of the central tensions affecting Maiden Rock's organizational structure in terms of the contradiction between commitments to equality and the rise of unintended hierarchy. Part and parcel of the Collective's concern with equalizing power and authority in decision-making is the belief that each individual should share equal responsibility for carrying out the work of the program. Part C identifies the second major dynamic tension within the organization which results from the rejection of bureaucratic and hierarchical work structures--in which responsibility follows from formal credentials and in which certain individuals are relegated to less rewarding and less autonomous work--and the effort to create a personally rewarding and egalitarian, yet efficient division of labor. The first section characterizes the division of labor within Maiden Rock, particularly the Collective, in terms of its flexibility and informality. A second section looks at the major exceptions which have been made to this rule at the individual level in terms of paid staff positions and at the broader structural level through the creation of the PPG. Finally, the analysis develops an understanding of the problems which result from the informal and flexible division of labor through elaboration of four key themes: (a) "overwhelmed and overworked," (b) "some people aren't carrying their load," (c) "who is responsible?," and (d) "some

people are assuming too much responsibility." First, however, what follows is a brief summary of the rationale behind the rejection of a bureaucratic and hierarchical division of labor and the organizational dilemmas facing those who wish to create more equitable work structures.

In rejecting rigid role definitions, collectives assume that most people have the capacity to develop new skills and assume higher levels of responsibility; and that all individuals should share in the more routine and less satisfying as well as more creative work. Feminists have had a particular concern with eliminating more hierarchical work structures because of the traditional relegation of women to more menial, less rewarding and lower status work.

In their manual on working collectives, Vocations for Social Change (1976) pointed out that most work collectives find they must experiment with different structures and procedures in order to implement more equitable sharing of work; that creating work structures which enhance individuals' growth while at the same time "getting the work done" is an ongoing struggle. Some of the major dilemmas typically confronting those who do try to implement collectivist work structures include: (a) finding ways of equitably sharing work while acknowledging real differences in skills and experience, (b) allowing individuals to pursue individual interests while insuring that less rewarding work gets done, and (c) creating flexibility which enables individuals to continue learning and assuming new responsibilities while maintaining "efficient" organization. The analysis which follows examines the ways in which Maiden Rock has resolved some of these issues through its own approach to dividing the work of the program.

"Equal sharing": flexibility and informality. It should be first noted that at the broadest level, Maiden Rock has divided the work of planning coordination program development from that of facilitating specific educational programs. The present analysis does not address this division, but considers the distribution of work within the basic coordinating structures, i.e., the Collective and the PPG.

As the "Overview" pointed out, during the first year of operation, overall responsibility for the Maiden Rock program was located within the single five-member coordinating Collective. In creating the PPG in the fall of 1976, the original Collective brought in twice as many women to share that overall responsibility and made a major division between specific program planning and overall policy-making, administration, and coordination. The merger of the remaining PPG members and four of the original Collective members in the fall of 1977 meant that once again, total responsibility rested within a single structure among a relatively small number of women.

The division of labor within the Collective itself has been characterized by little formal ongoing delegation of responsibility, i.e., by flexible and changing roles. According to one of the Collective members,

> The process [of dividing work] has been up and down. We've gone all over the place--from thinking that everyone should participate in everything to having people do primarily what they're interested in. I think it takes a combination of both. . . . Everybody should share what nobody wants to do and for the rest pick and choose. That's worked out the best. People take things based on what they're interested in because then they have some energy and enthusiasm. Then we each commit ourselves to do some of the shitwork, like getting the mailing out. . . . Even then there are some of us that like certain parts of that more than others, and we prefer to do it that way.

Implicit throughout the history of the Collective has been the assumption that each woman should share equal responsibility for the program, but as the comment above suggests, deciding what that means and how it should be determined has been more problematic.

Within the Collective, certain work has been consistently shared among all the members including: overall program planning and coordination, staff hiring, policy-making, and discussion of philosophy, politics, and goals. This work has represented the core of the Collective's creative activity. Some of the more routine and less rewarding work also shared includes: answering mail, taking minutes at meetings, getting out publicity, and maintaining the office, i.e., largely clerical work. Some of these activities are delegated on the spot when the need is identified at meetings, e.g., making final scheduling arrangements and introducing speakers in the evening lecture series or distributing publicity brochures; other tasks are rotated on a regular basis, e.g., chairing meetings and taking notes, and are integrated into the ongoing Collective work.

In addition to that parceled out among all Collective members, a large proportion of the Collective's work is assumed on an ad hoc basis by different individuals as it arises, e.g., writing a fund-raising letter from the organization, developing a workshop evaluation form, or making contacts with other organizations. Most often, the individual who raises a particular concern or proposes an action assumes at least preliminary responsibility for following up on the proposal if there is general support. As an example, at one Collective meeting, one member reported that she had been contacted by the National Women's Studies

Association about the possibility of scheduling a conference of the organization at the Maiden Rock farm. The Collective as a whole decided that if it was possible, that would be a positive thing for the program to pursue. At that stage, however, it was left to the woman first contacted to follow-up with the Association until more concrete plans were made.

The creation of "task groups" (for an indefinite period of time) in the fall of 1977 represented a move towards regular and formalized delegation of responsibilities. As noted in the "Overview", the Collective hoped this structure would provide a vehicle for allowing women to work with the program on a limited basis, i.e., without having to assume full Collective responsibilities. The idea was for the task groups to meet on alternating weeks with the Collective so that work could be done outside of the general meetings in a more regular way. Given the small numbers, however, these "groups" never materialized as such (with the exception of one), but individuals did assume certain ongoing administrative responsibilities.

Exceptions to the rule: paid staff and the PPG. The major exceptions to the general flexibility and informal allocation of work, the rotation and sharing of responsibility have been the non-teaching paid staff positions, i.e., the farm managers, student interns, and the "arts skills workshop series" coordinator. In each of these cases, individuals have been paid by the Collective to assume certain specific responsibilities in relation to the program. In the case of the first two, job descriptions were developed and the positions were advertised--the farm

manager position within the informal feminist communications network and the intern position through the umbrella Urban Internship Program. Actually, after the first summer, the job of farm manager was not advertised, since one of the women originally hired joined the Collective and took the position the second summer. (During the third summer, a former PPG member informally negotiated with the Collective to take on the farm manager job without pay.)

The contradictions built into the position of farm manager and student intern have already been discussed in Part B on "structural hierarchy." That analysis emphasized the conflict between the desires of the Collective to have the women in these positions operate fairly independently, on par with other Collective members, but at the same time to be accountable to supervision by the Collective. The third paid staff position evolved very differently from the first, however, and has been the most tension-free.

Rather than having been identified by the Collective as a whole as a necessary position to be filled, the "arts skills workshop series" coordinator position was created in the grant proposal submitted by two of the Collective members on their own initiative. The position was defined by a job description in the grant; however, it was essentially self-created since it was assumed that one of the grant writers would take on the coordination if the funds came through. The coordinator was never "accountable" to the Collective in the way the individuals in the other two paid positions were; and she continued to assume her basic Collective member responsibilities. In certain ways,

however, this position most diverged from the normative division of labor since it gave one Collective member primary (if not exclusive) responsibility for developing and coordinating the major portion of Maiden Rock's winter/spring 1978 programming.

Having one individual in the position of assuming so much control and responsibility for program planning, and getting paid for doing so, might be expected to create tensions within a collectivist structure which emphasizes equal responsibility and reward for work. On the contrary, Collective members were rather pleased that someone had taken the initiative to secure outside funding for the program. This effort was viewed as the kind of individual initiative which enhanced the development of the program. As one Collective member commented,

> At times, any one of us will go ahead and do something without telling anyone in advance. It's nothing we've been asked to do. But we just follow up an interest of our own and it happens. . . . In terms of setting up someone separate to [coordinate the workshop series,] I would like us to do more of that--to get some sort of support money from outside--because the administrative part is very tedious and time-consuming. That just strikes me as being realistic, and I think it's wonderful that M. L. can get paid for doing something that otherwise the Collective would have ended up doing. It would have gotten done, but probably not with as many workshops and we'd all feel a lot more tired out. . . . There are some things that shouldn't be done collectively and that kind of administration is one of them. It's not policy-making at all. It's just smoothing things out and keeping records.

Were it not the case that most of the Collective women have full-time professional jobs, there might have been more conflict generated over the creation of a paid administrative position within the Collective. As it was, however, no other Collective member was actively interested in being financially supported for their work in the program. It is

also true that the actual work involved in coordinating the workshop series would come to far more than the amount originally projected in the grant, upon which the salary was based, i.e., the position was no "bargain".

In addition to the paid staff positions, the most formalized division of labor within the program resulted from the creation of the PPG. In some ways, the PPG functioned as a more permanent "task group," though one having more comprehensive responsibility than most of the other informal task groups established within the Collective. What was most distinctive about the PPG, however, was not so much the scope of its activity, but its greater separation from the overall policy-making and administration.

In Part B, this fact was discussed in terms of the "inadvertent" hierarchy which developed between the two structures. Another dimension of the problem had to do with the somewhat arbitrary division of labor between the two groups as well as insufficient coordination. From a different perspective, the problem could be seen in terms of too much overlap between the groups without a clear separation of each one's responsibilities. For example, the conflict over the winter/spring of 1977 brochure (already described in Part B) resulted in part from the division of responsibility for actual program planning from that of program publicity.

Another incident referred to by various Collective and former PPG members highlights some of the confusion and tension which followed the division of responsibility between the two groups. This had to do with

an orientation meeting held for the facilitators of the winter/spring 1977 workshops. While the PPG had done all the program planning and selection of facilitators, the Collective, and more specifically "A", organized the orientation meeting. As described by various women, the meeting was very confusing--particularly to PPG members and to the facilitators--since it was not clear who was "in charge" and what the actual purpose of the meeting was. The confusion largely resulted because of a power dynamic between "A" and another Collective member ("C") over who would chair the meeting. This, it turned out, resulted from discussions within the Collective regarding "A's" dominant role in the group, and "C's" last minute effort at the facilitators' meeting to have someone else chair the meeting. In addition to being confusing for the PPG and facilitators, one PPG member talked about the particular embarrassment PPG members felt since they had had the primary contact with facilitators before the meeting. The incident reflected the problem of not having other PPG members involved more directly in the planning of the meeting as well as their lack of awareness about internal dynamics in the Collective.

The PPG did exert some influence on overall program planning and policy-making (e.g., the decision regarding the "women-identified" issue discussed in Section 1) through the joint PPG-Collective meetings and through the two women ("A" and "C") who participated in both structures. However, these channels of influence were not formalized nor were they very regular. Also, the situation was structured in such a way that the Collective had more of a say in the PPG than the PPG had

in the Collective. Unlike the task groups created from within the Collective, the PPG never played the same integral role in the overall coordination of Maiden Rock.

Problems and tensions. The problems discussed above have followed from the more formal division of labor which the program has created in order to carry out its work. As discussed earlier in this section, however, internally, the Collective has been characterized by a more informal division of labor, lacking rigid delineation of roles and responsibilities and using few formal criteria for allocating tasks. For the most part, this flexibility has been accepted by Collective members and has contributed to the mutual sharing of responsibility to which the group is committed. At the same time, there have been certain "trade-offs" to maintaining such an informal division of labor resulting in several problems. These have included: (a) people feeling overwhelmed and overworked, (b) perceptions that some individuals aren't carrying their share of the load, (c) some work never getting done, and (d) perceptions that some are taking on more than their share of the work. Each of these problems is elaborated upon within this section.

"Overwhelmed and overworked." One of the repeated problems the Collective has faced has resulted from too much work to do and not enough time, resources or people with which to do it. One of the major reasons this problem has existed is that Maiden Rock has been an "extra" project for most of the Collective and PPG members, many of whom have had simultaneous commitments to demanding full-time work and/or other political commitments. This problem is very real and was directly

acknowledged in interviews with various Collective members. In addition, however, the very commitment to sharing collective responsibility for decision-making, program planning, and administrative work means that each individual has had to assume major responsibility for the functioning of the program. (This has been true specifically for Collective members.) Two of the more critical periods in Maiden Rock's history in terms of work overload were: (a) at the end of the first summer's program--the fall 1976 and (b) in the fall 1977.

By establishing the PPG, in the fall of 1976, the Collective almost tripled the number of people working with the program and relieved itself of significant responsibility. Had the group not been able to divide work among a larger number of women at that time, it is doubtful whether the Collective itself could have organized the extensive winter/spring of 1977 and summer of 1977 programs. Even with this division in labor, Collective members still felt burdened by the amount of work to be done on top of other issues they were addressing, e.g., political questions around the lesbian issue and interpersonal dynamics. However, they at least knew that part of the responsibility for the program was now shouldered by the new PPG recruits.

The second "crisis" period came in the fall of 1977 coinciding with the merger of the PPG and the Collective. In addition to the loss of many of the PPG members, the program was operating without the assistance of a student intern (she had left), and critically, without the additional work "A" had been putting in during her sabbatical from the university the previous year. During the research period, one of the

Collective members described the situation as "desperate". "It's real different now than when "A" was on sabbatical. She did a lot of the darn piddley work down in the office and had a lot more time. None of us really have that time. That's why we're desperate to have the new intern." It will be remembered that during the fall of 1977, the Collective cut back significantly on the program planning activities leaving the bulk of that work to the coordinator of the "arts skills workshop series." Still, during the research period, Collective members repeatedly felt frustrated that they could not accomplish all of their agenda items at the weekly meetings. While most of the Collective women talked about their greater comfort with the single structure--putting everybody on "an equal footing"--the group also experienced the pressure of shouldering all the responsibility by a much smaller group.

"Some people aren't carrying their load." A basic assumption of the Collective has been that each woman should share an equal responsibility for the work of the program. At different periods, however, certain individuals have felt resentments about carrying a disproportionate amount of that work. Lacking clear-cut delineations of work responsibilities, as well as the ad hoc allocation of many tasks, it is much harder for anyone to have a clear overview of exactly who is doing how much.

The most frequently referred to example of this problem was that of "A's" resentment during the second year. This was discussed in Part B in terms of the power she developed and the guilt other Collective members felt about "letting her down." "B" also talked about

feelings of resentment she had during the first year, when she felt she was assuming an unequal share of the barn renovation project. An example of the more ongoing kind of tension around work load surfaced during the period of research at one of the Collective meetings. At that time, one of the women insinuated that others were not fulfilling their office responsibilities (taking phone messages), clearly suggesting that she, however, was meeting hers.

These kinds of tensions have emerged directly from the Collective's accepted pattern of distributing work. Given the loose structure, it is possible for certain individuals to assume more responsibility than others without it being immediately obvious, i.e., it is difficult to have a clear overview of how much work each individual is taking on. Assessments about the distribution of work are thus highly influenced by subjective factors. One woman made the point when she commented, "I think it's not a matter of doing exactly the same amount, but the psychological sense of sharing that burden. Feeling the support from somebody else." Thus, other dynamics operating in the group influence the extent to which Collective members <u>feel</u> the work load is equitable, even if objectively individuals are assuming different amounts.

Another source of the problem stems from the contradiction between the commitment to collective sharing of work and the rather independent styles of some of the Collective members. This issue was highlighted by one of the Collective members referring to herself and several other women. She talked about her own tendency to assume major responsibility for certain work voluntarily, but later feeling resentment that others were not as involved.

This dynamic helps to explain some of the tensions surrounding "A's" role during the second year. On her own volition, "A" assumed additional responsibility for administrative work during that period, having more time available as a result of her sabbatical. While it might appear that if an individual volunteered to take on extra work, they would not feel unfairly burdened, in reality, it often happens that resentments begin to build up. Volunteering to take on extra work is itself a complicated process and there are many reasons why individuals choose to do so. As noted above, one's experience of the amount of work one is assuming is highly subjective and influenced by the kind of support one feels from others.

On the positive side, the flexibility within the Collective which allowed "A" to assume greater responsibilities for a period of time, respects different individuals interests, access to time and resources, and encourages individual initiative. Collective members value that flexibility and feel that it gives people options for the ways in which they are involved in the program. At the same time, without clearer cut guidelines on each individual's responsibilities, the group is more susceptible to the fluctuations of subjective valuations. Those who "voluntarily" take on more are eventually apt to resent those who do not.

"Who is responsible?" Another problem which has been exacerbated by the informal division of labor is that of certain work not getting done. In rejecting hierarchical and bureaucratic work structures, collectives replace "efficiency" and "productivity" as the primary

organizational goals with the creation of satisfying work and democratic participation. One of the problems facing alternative programs has to do with balancing such commitments with the creation of effective organizations. After describing the confusion surrounding the scheduling and preliminary preparation for two workshops she had co-facilitated, one woman interviewed spoke directly to the issue stating,

> [There is a tendency] in collectives to have a hard time being serious about getting things done efficiently. That's compounded when most people have other full-time jobs and this is a thing done in their spare time. But the emphasis on collectivity should not lead to things being done haphazardly and randomly. . . . We don't like bureaucracies, but we have to be able to do [administrative work] as well as they do.

Within Maiden Rock, the failure to follow up on administrative and clerical details has cost the program credibility and public support on various occasions. In the course of interviewing program participants, workshop facilitators and community women, various examples of such slips surfaced. For example, numbers of facilitators talked about the confusion that surrounded the final scheduling of the workshops which they facilitated. One Collective member talked about the problem of many phone calls never being returned during the first summer. A woman in the community talked about her annoyance at Maiden Rock when a check of hers had already been cashed by the Collective even though the workshop she signed for was cancelled.

Some of these slips are relatively minor and have been taken in stride by Collective and community women. Others, however, have been more significant. For example, one facilitator reported that she had never been paid for the workshop she conducted. Another example was

the cancellation of one of the workshops originally scheduled during the research period due to lack of enrollment. This problem resulted from mis-communication between those responsible for arranging publicity and registration. The facilitators' orientation meeting described earlier was another occasion where the Collective's lack of internal coordination created a confusing and uncomfortable situation. From one former PPG member's perspective, that incident "left some lasting confusion and skepticism among the facilitators about how Maiden Rock was functioning."

"Some people are assuming too much responsibility." It has already been suggested that the flexible division of labor and the informal lines of responsibility within the Collective have facilitated different individuals' taking initiative in carrying out the work of the organization; that the Collective supports and encourages such independence as an important way of developing the program. (The positive response to the initiative around the grant is a case in point.) Since no one individual has the authority to delgate responsibilities, the Collective depends on each woman's willingness to assume responsibilities voluntarily. The underside of this situation, however, is that in some cases, Collective members have been criticized for assuming "too much" initiative, crossing the boundary of what has been considered group responsibility.

There have already been several references to the criticisms certain Collective members had of "A" for assuming too much responsibility (perceived as control) during the second year. A more isolated incident

of tensions regarding individual initiatives was recorded in minutes from a Collective meeting held during the time of the negotiations over the zoning of the farm. The Collective had decided to hold an "open house" at the farm as a way of establishing better relations with the surrounding community. What happened, however, is that one Collective member wrote up an invitation and sent it out without first having the others look it over. At least some individuals in the Collective indicated that they thought they should have been consulted before the letter was actually sent out. Whether because of the sensitivity around the whole zoning problem, or other tensions within the group, this relatively minor initiative provoked a negative response. In retrospect, it is hard to know exactly what other issues may have been behind the criticism. On another occasion, over a different matter, it is possible that such an initiative would not have created a problem.

To the extent that individual initiative has relieved the clerical or administrative work load of the Collective, it has generally been accepted and appreciated. Problems have resulted when such gestures appear to step into the realm of policy-making or representation of the Collective and the program to the public. There is shared agreement that some areas of work and decision-making are clearly the whole Collective's responsibility, e.g., final selection of workshop facilitators, decisions about the use of money, final program planning. However, that leaves a wide margin of work to be done and decisions to be made which are not clearly the province of the whole group and which individuals could feel comfortable assuming. For the most part, the Collective has successfully made those distinctions using intuitive or implicit

criteria. Because the lines of responsibility are flexibly and informally drawn, however, the probability of conflict is increased. As indicated above, many factors may determine whether a particular initiative is seen as inappropriately unilateral, e.g., who made the move, other dynamics in operation, the larger context of the situation. When such behavior is sometimes rewarded and other times criticized, a certain level of ambiguity is created within the organization.

Summary. Part C has elaborated the meanings of the rejection of bureaucratic and hierarchical division of labor in terms of the specific work structures which have developed within the Maiden Rock program. The Collective's approach to dividing work has been characterized by the emphasis on shared responsibility, and by informality and flexibility. On the positive side, this approach has been shown to have the effect of: (a) encouraging individual initiative, (b) allowing individuals to pursue personal interests, (c) providing a sense of shared enterprise and community, and (d) avoiding narrowly proscribed spheres of responsibility and authority. Some of the problems this informality has generated, however, have been: (a) individuals feeling overworked and overwhelmed by shouldering full responsibility for the program, (b) ambiguity regarding who is doing what and how much sometimes leading to resentments that some individuals aren't carrying the same share of the work, (c) the problem of certain work not getting done, and (d) individuals sometimes assuming responsibility for more work than others have thought legitimate.

As exceptions to the principle of "equal sharing" and in spite of certain problems, the program has formalized certain clear cut responsibilities (mostly clerical and/or administrative) as a way of guaranteeing that critical work is accomplished. The one major effort to formalize a division of labor among groups of women, i.e., the creation of the PPG and the separation of curriculum planning from overall administration, was not considered a successful or satisfactory structure by most, and the program has reverted to more informal fluctuating work "groups" with more narrowly defined responsibilities.

Part D will look at the third dynamic tension integrally related to the commitment to equality, the rejection of hierarchical and bureaucratic structures, and the emphasis on collective responsibility for work. That is, the tension between time devoted to instrumental activity versus that committed to dealing with group dynamics.

Part D: time and emotion: task versus process.

Parts B and C have characterized two of the central tensions affecting Maiden Rock's organizational structure in terms of: (a) the contradictions between the commitment to equality and the rise of informal hierarchy and (b) the attempt to create a personally rewarding and equitable yet effective division of labor. Integrally related to these two dynamics is a third central tension which arises from the Collective's effort to meet the social and emotional needs of the members while at the same time accomplishing the instrumental goals of the program.

The importance of meeting social and emotional needs in participatory groups has been discussed by Mansbridge (1973) in terms of the tendency of such organizations to become "total institutions." That is, in order to cement individuals' commitments to the time-consuming and sometimes emotionally demanding process of collective work, alternative organizations often develop a focus on sustaining supportive relationships and attending to group dynamics in addition to more goal-oriented activity. As a result, Mansbridge suggested relationships within participatory groups more and more begin to take on the character of friendship networks in which members see each other on a frequent basis, often resulting in the formation of living/working collectives.

Freeman (1976) and Mansbridge (1973) both have pointed out that the integration of personal support and sharing with more task-oriented activity is particularly characteristic of feminist groups. Building on the insights gained in consciousness-raising groups, Mansbridge noted that feminists realize that "personal interaction or sharing of emotions, vulnerabilities and problems unrelated to the task, cements a group together and gives it the resources to handle task problems that arise among members" (p. 357). Mansbridge also suggested that women's groups have a greater ability than men's to maintain participatory structures since "women are more likely to value the necessary affiliative and maintenance activities as ends in themselves" (p. 359). In addition to the sharing of "unrelated" issues described above, maintenance functions can also include time spent examining group dynamics, e.g., discussing patterns of interactions, how people feel, what roles they play. In both cases, the activities involved are not explicitly

"productive" but tend to become important dimensions of the group's experience.

The purpose of Part D is to uncover the specific meanings attached to the affiliative and maintenance activities in terms of the development of the Maiden Rock Collective. The analysis develops first from a consideration of the Collective's practice of "personal sharing" before and after meetings. In addition, Part D examines the tension between the meeting of social and emotional needs of participants and pursuing more instrumental goals of the program in terms of three issues: (a) emotional drain, (b) competition for time, and (c) the size of the organization.

Social ties: "personal sharing." As mentioned in the "Overview" of the organization since the first year, the Collective has spent considerable time dealing with internal dynamics, responding to the personal feelings and concerns of the members. Also, from the start, the Collective was built on a network of friendship and intimate relationships. After the formation of the Collective, these relationships also began to develop within the particular context of the organization, and maintenance of the close personal ties became an integral part of the development of the program.

The most formalized way in which the Collective has responded to the concerns and feelings of individual members has been through the practice of "personal sharing" before and after each meeting. At the beginning of meetings, each woman makes a statement about the primary thoughts and feelings she brings into the group since the previous

meeting. While one person talks, the others listen, and there is little actual discussion of the issues raised. Some of what is shared may pertain directly to the group, but much of it is more peripheral in the sense described by Mansbridge (1973). A sample of some of the comments made in the personal sharing during the research included: one woman sharing her feelings about a therapy session; another describing her feelings about beginning a new semester teaching; someone else indicating she was preoccupied about a disturbing visit to a doctor; yet another indicating she wasn't feeling well and would not be taking an active role in the meeting. Some comments simply report on an event or experience, however, the prevailing norm is to express personal feelings, and many of the comments made raise highly charged emotional issues. (As already mentioned in Chapter III, [see page 119] the level of intimacy reflected in the personal sharing at my first Collective meeting was slightly overwhelming--quickly drawing me into the personal lives of the women present.)

The comments made at the end of the meetings tend to be shorter and more often lead to some interchange among the women. These comments also more often reflect back on the substantive issues or dynamics of the meeting, though not always, sometimes raising unrelated matters.

The personal sharing has the character of a collective ritual and serves several important functions for the group. At the surface level, the opening statements help to bridge the gap in the members' contact between meetings. The sharing also provides an opportunity for individuals to let others know what feelings they bring into the meeting which

may affect the quality of their participation; more fundamentally it functions to (a) solidify the sense of trust and mutual support and (b) strengthen members' personal investment in the group.

The importance of the collective sharing was illustrated in the comments made by one woman in an interview. She indicated that oftentimes, what she shared had, in fact, already been communicated to some of the Collective members individually; she restated them at the meetings to share them in the context of the whole group. Thus, it was not so much the explicit information which was important, but the collective acknowledgement of the communication which became personally meaningful.

The importance of the personal relationships in cementing women's ties to the program was also illustrated in comments made by other Collective members. For example, the remarks made by one woman during the opening "personal sharing" at one meeting were revealing. She began by saying that she wasn't feeling well and would not take an active role, but added that she had come to the meeting because it felt "safe and supportive" to be there. Talking about the threads holding the Collective women together, another member referred to the feeling of community; she added, "The ties are not intellectual. The ties are real personal, and that's what makes the difference. . . what gives it the sustaining power and the longevity--what makes it a community." Still another woman referred to the significance of the personal relationships within the Collective as a source of her motivation for working with Maiden Rock. In addition to the intellectual stimulation and the commitment to the principles of feminist education, she cited the "absolute

affection. . . the real sense of sisterhood and love I feel for [the others]" as an important element motivating her participation.

Given the absence of material incentives as well as the time and difficulties involved in creating an alternative institution, rewarding personal relationships become an important factor in sustaining the Collective women's commitment to the program. The satisfaction that comes from these relationships makes disappointments such as a workshop cancellation or low enrollments less demoralizing and the more tedious clerical work more palatable. As one woman remarked, "It makes it easier for us to get the mailing out."

What has been discussed so far are the positive consequences of the Collective's concern for developing personal relationships, i.e., solidifying group cohesion and individual commitment and buffering frustrations related to explicit program development. At the same time, there are certain tensions which the Collective experiences as a result of its commitment to respond to individual feelings and concerns. These have to do with the emotional drain which often results, the competition for time spent on "task", and the tendency to limit the size of the group.

Emotional drain. In many ways, the attention given to the nurturance of supportive personal relationships has made individual participation within the group more personally rewarding. At the same time, however, maintaining such relationships is often emotionally draining. Human relationships are always complicated and interpersonal tensions develop within most work and/or political settings. Usually, however, such

tensions are considered "personal issues" to be dealt with outside of the organizational context. As in many alternative organizations, however, addressing such issues is considered central to the maintenance of the Maiden Rock Collective.

At certain periods, particularly during the first year, tensions within the Collective originated from individuals' relationships outside the group. However, consistently, conflicts in dynamics (such as those described in Sections 1 and 2) have emerged directly from the Collective's functioning. Minutes from Collective meetings repeatedly record discussions of "group process" and interpersonal dynamics during the personal sharing time. As previously noted (see Part B), during the second year, some of the group dynamics became so problematic that the Collective met with an outside organizational consultant in order to deal with the internal conflicts more self-consciously. While the commitment to discussing such issues has eventually moved the Collective to healthier and more open relationships, the process also creates significant strain; in certain periods, this has threatened the capacity of the Collective to continue to work together.

In contrast to the Collective, the PPG never experienced the same degree of interpersonal tensions and did not focus as much attention on the group's dynamics--largely it seems because they were smoother. As noted earlier, the PPG did not share the same history of involved personal relationships, and they always remained more narrowly task-oriented. According to PPG members, although there was a similar practice of personal sharing at meetings, this remained a more pro forma "checking in"

which took little time and did not tap the same depth of personal material. The absence of "heavy dealing" with group dynamics largely explains the greater ease the two Collective-PPG members experienced participating within the latter group.

Competition for time. Another dilemma which results from the commitment to address social and emotional relationships within an organization is the practical one of competition for limited time, i.e., time devoted to "maintenance" functions competes with more task-oriented activity. Part of the reason Collective members have felt overwhelmed by the work of running the program is that much of the group's time is not directly devoted to "business". As indicated earlier, most of the Collective members' time is already limited by commitments to work and other social and political activity. Allocating time to affiliative and maintenance activity means that the time available for more explicit program development is additionally limited. Tensions around this issue came to a head during the period of the research. They can be understood by looking at what happened after the merger between the PPG and the Collective.

In the fall of 1977, the new "collapsed" Collective decided it needed more time together in order to maintain the personal contacts among the women. With the merger, the Collective had almost doubled in size and incorporated several women who had limited outside involvement with other members of the group. In order to have more time together, the group decided to schedule pot luck dinners before each meeting.

Scheduling the pot luck dinners--which were optional and not always attended by all the women--interestingly did not lead to less formal meeting time used for personal sharing. On the contrary, Collective members noted that the sharing time had, in fact, been gradually increasing since the merger of the two groups. Women were apparently "saving" certain information for the more formal sharing when all the Collective members would be present and attention more focused. At the same time, it was reported that women were sharing from a more intimate level. In fact, during the research period, the Collective decided that too much time was being devoted to the personal sharing and that not enough time was left to conduct program business. The issue surfaced after one meeting when the sharing took up a half hour of a two-hour meeting and the group barely reached discussion of the major agenda item.

At the subsequent Collective meeting (during the personal sharing at the end), one woman expressed her concern about the time devoted to the sharing and suggested cutting back on the practice. Having the issue raised, another individual observed that much of the sharing was not centrally related to the Collective's work, and suggested that more focus should be given to the group's internal process. While there was general agreement with this suggestion, one woman ("D") argued for the importance of continuing the sharing as a way of building trust within the group which she defined as an important part of "feminist process." Significantly, this was the same woman who had originally initiated the practice in the group, who was often the first to

begin the sharing at meetings and was influential in setting the norm of sharing more emotionally-laden information. All the same, by the end of the discussion, the group agreed that they should use the pot luck time for more of the "external" personal exchange and to limit the sharing in meetings to issues more pertinent to the group's internal dynamics.

During the first two years of the program's operation, "maintenance" activities of the Collective were often directed towards resolving tensions in interpersonal and group dynamics. As already noted, the relationships among the four to five Collective women were fairly intense as a result of their individual connections outside the group and their shared experience as "founders" of a new program.

After the merger with the PPG, the addition of three new people and the loss of one of the Collective members, the relationships within the group were "neutralized", and some of the intensity diffused. Collective members reported experiencing a period of smoother group dynamics with fewer interpersonal tensions and less time devoted to resolving group conflicts. At the same time, however, the Collective was structuring in more time to develop the personal relationships within the expanded group and personal sharing was becoming more peripheral to issues directly related to the program.

Around the time that the Collective began to reassess the personal sharing, described above, two collective members "confessed" in interviews that the personal sharing at meetings was not all that it appeared to be, i.e., that the apparent openness and intimacy did not extend to

the immediate interactions within the organization. As one woman commented,

> What is said at the end [of meetings] is a real "stay from it" issue. We don't say "talk about how you feel about how the meeting went or what you observed or how you felt while you participated." It's not a "here and now" question. I have felt the need lots of times to talk about what's going on right now--to clarify the relationships. And we've not really done that very well.

The other Collective member implied a more deliberate attempt to avoid discussing such issues, stating that,

> We have never really dealt with interpersonal stuff except when there is a real flare up, for example between "A" and "C". . . . Basically, we have not dealt with our process as a group that much. . . . We avoid them. It's a lot easier to share from our personal places than to deal with the real here and now--how we're feeling about the group, or the tensions having to do with what's going on outside the group.

She added that she believed the group had dealt with process issues more in the past, and attributed this to, in part, a former Collective member ("C") whose presence tended to provoke more conflict and subsequent discussion within the group.

Various factors may actually have accounted for the changes in the Collective's internal functioning after the merger. It has already been suggested that the mere addition of several new women may have diffused the intensity of the original Collective members' relationships. Specific personalities also may be important. It is also likely that the newly expanded Collective needed to establish a new level of trust and acceptance before more difficult group issues could be safely raised without threatening the group. The previous discussion of the

personal sharing issue indicated that during the period of the research, some of these issues were beginning to surface. What has been consistent, however, whether the focus has been on resolving group tensions or merely building and sustaining supportive personal relationships, is that the time spent on maintenance and affiliative activities has competed for time allocated to specific program development.

To the extent that addressing social-emotional needs and building trust and support become important incentives for participation, the group faces the risk of orienting its activity more towards meeting those concerns than to more instrumental activity. As Mansbridge (1973) noted, affiliative activities are often seen by women as ends in themselves. The analysis has already suggested that the feelings of mutual trust and support and the energy invested in sustaining personal relationships had assumed primary importance to numbers of the women in the Collective. Reflecting this sentiment, one woman commented, "I think the [greater time and intimacy of the personal sharing] is a sign of how much people are willing to get for themselves and put themselves into Maiden Rock. We're making the meetings really important to us." As for some, she added, Maiden Rock was the primary place in which they shared of themselves so personally, and this, she felt, was clearly an important function of the group.

Given the simultaneous decision to restrict its programming activities for the fall of 1977 and winter seasons, it appeared in some ways that the Collective was beginning to function more as an internal support group than as a working collective. One woman frankly admitted

that over time, she had come to see her participation in the Collective more as a form of "recreation", i.e., providing her with intellectual stimulation and personal support but not reflecting a sincere commitment to building a major "women's learning institute." It was not that her participation was not serious or authentic; she recognized, however, that more would be required to develop the kind of stable and financially viable program she had originally hoped Maiden Rock might become. Personally, she indicated she did not feel she was willing to put in the kind of volunteer time that would be required to make that a real possibility. Other Collective members expressed the fear that they would "burn out" given the limitations on their time and the demands of the task before such a vision was realized. To the extent that affiliative and "process" activities do become ends in themselves, Maiden Rock risks not becoming the serious "feminist learning institute of the Midwest" which it likes to envision.

Limited size. The desire to maintain mutually supportive and personally satisfying relationships within the Collective tends to create another conflict for the program having to do with the size of the group. Given the limitations on most of the women's time, the relatively small size of the Collective places a constraint on the scope of the programming which they can handle. As a result of the tensions generated by the dual structure of the PPG, most of the women were left feeling that a single structure was more workable. At the same time, however, concern was expressed among several women about the "in-grown" character of the Collective.

Interestingly, the women who voiced this concern were former PPG members who now found themselves working within a smaller, more homogeneous structure. The original Collective members may not have felt such concern, finding themselves working with an expanded, less intimately involved group since the merger. Two of the former PPG members particularly talked about the need for the Collective to expand its membership in order to both bring in new perspectives--fresh ideas--and to alleviate the work load. On the other hand, there seemed to be a clear ambivalence about changing the "good relations" within the Collective by bringing new women in.

On this theme, one of the original Collective members expressed the fear she had had about such a transition when the group was first considering merging with the PPG. "I was afraid of the unknown. Things had been working with the four of us and it felt nice. . . . I didn't want the size to get out of hand," she commented. She added that her fears had not actually materialized, in part, because only three of the PPG members actually stayed on. Talking about the current status of the program, another woman expressed her concern about changing the character of meetings if new women joined the group. Her ambivalence surfaced as she described her reactions to the presence of the new student intern at a recent Collective meeting.

> It seems, the intern's presence might [change the close personal feelings we have at meetings]. But this may be a good time to bring in some other women because the process <u>will</u> have to change somewhat. I don't know how to balance out getting what we want personally, that intimate sense--which doesn't have to happen at those specific meetings--[and still bring new women in]. Somehow, I think we'll have to change and it would probably be good for Maiden Rock.

The impact of expanding membership in any organization is influenced by the particular personalities of the new individuals. It was noted earlier that the student intern's style clashed with that of the Collective's generally, and that was certainly part of the "difference" that was felt. Even with more compatible styles, however, increasing the size of the group would multiply the number of interpersonal interactions, requiring more time and energy to maintain and potentially generating new conflicts. In fact, the new intern did not work well with the others, and both parties mutually agreed she would stop working soon after she had begun.

The ambivalence about expanding the Collective's membership has another side to it which has to do with a fear of Maiden Rock being perceived as an "exclusive" or "closed" community. This feeling was expressed most directly by one of the former PPG members who talked about the conflict she experienced personally of not wanting to be seen by others in the area in terms of a "group identity." In talking about the difficulty of avoiding such labeling, she indicated that there were people who "think that there's already a Maiden Rock in-crowd that probably overlaps with the women's coffeehouse regulars. They expect that they would feel like strangers or intruders on the farm." This comment reflected her concern about the perception of the Maiden Rock program overall. With respect to the Collective in particular, the extent to which involvement with the group reflects the character of a friendship network, the insider-outsider distinctions become exacerbated.

There is then a double edge to the closeness of the relationships among the women in the Collective. On the positive side, the close proximity in which most of the members live, and the web of intimate and friendship relationships connecting them greatly facilitate communication and the carrying out of the Collective's work--virtually necessary given the limited time actually spent in meetings and in the office. However, the desire to maintain such close relationships works against one of the Collective's objective interests in having more women involved with the program. From the outside, the perception of such closeness can tend to keep other women away from the program. Commenting on the difficulty someone outside the network of personal relationships would have feeling their full power in the Collective, one member commented, "It's like the [exclusive] power of couples, that couples never realize. I think that happens with Maiden Rock among the people who've got these strong personal connections." To the extent that the Collective is hampered by its small size, the desire to maintain the highly supportive, mutually satisfying internal personal relationships appears to work against the organization's more instrumental goal of establishing a fully developed, stable, and viable alternative program.

Summary. Part D has examined the importance of maintenance and affiliative activity in terms of the functioning of the Maiden Rock Collective. This has been specifically approached in terms of elaborating the meanings of the Collective's ritual of "personal sharing" at meetings. At the positive end, the attention to the social and emotional needs of Collective members has been shown to function to

increase individuals' personal investment in the program, to solidify the sense of group cohesion and collective commitment, and to provide a buffer for the frustrations and real obstacles which the program confronts in its effort to create a viable alternative institution. At the same time, the importance attached to addressing personal need and concerns, to building trust and acceptance has been shown to have an effect of limiting the organization's ability to accomplish more instrumental goals, i.e., of offering regular, fully developed alternative feminist educational programming. The tensions between these two priorities have been understood in terms of the emotional demands of maintaining personally rewarding and mutually supporting relationships, the pragmatic competition for scarce time, and the effect of tending to limit the membership of the organization.

Footnotes

[1] Note 2 in Chapter I has already referred to one of the major tendencies within the women's movement, i.e., socialist-feminism. Jagger (1977) has identified four other theoretical and organizational tendencies each of which has different assumptions about the necessary conditions for women's liberation. These are: liberal feminism, classical Marxist feminism, radical feminism, and lesbian-separatism. In the preliminary survey (see Appendix) sent to Maiden Rock, the Collective identified its political orientation in terms of being "lesbian" and "radical feminist." Rather than explicating these perspectives from theoretical literature, I have chosen to examine the ideological orientation of the program in terms of the everyday language and concepts used by the Collective members themselves.

[2] In fact, the Collective later reversed its first decision and scheduled the workshop for teachers ("designing non-sexist education") in the Cities. In a phone call with one Collective member in July of 1978, I learned that Maiden Rock ultimately decided not to offer the workshop at all. This was explained in terms of a fear that teachers who might attend the program ("identified with feminism at all") might be vulnerable in the "climate of retrenchment in the schools." She added, that the Collective had discussed other possible ways of working with teachers in the fall. This explanation seemed excessively paranoid to me and left me confused about exactly why and how the decision had been made. What wasn't explicitly mentioned, but may have influenced the Collective's decision, however, was the fact that an active movement had developed in St. Paul to reverse a "gay rights" resolution which had been previously passed by the local City Council. It is possible that the charged political climate influenced the Collective's decision.

[3] My own reactions to visiting the farm during my stay in Minnesota were similar to those reported by other women. The natural beauty and expansiveness of the area was breathtaking, and I too felt the vicarious sense of accomplishment knowing that the barn renovation had been done entirely by women.

[4] The gardening collective was a group of about ten women from the Twin Cities area who made arrangements with the farm owner, independent of Maiden Rock, to plant a summer garden, sharing the produce and canning vegetables at the farm at the end of the summer. Various women referred to the garden collective as a model of the kind of project which took clear advantage of the particular assets of the farm.

[5] Information regarding program participants was gathered from several sources: (a) application forms which had been used for registration for the first summer's programs, (b) impressions of individual workshop facilitators, (c) the Collective members' overall perceptions of program participants, and (d) direct observation at several educational events during my stay in Minneapolis.

[6] As indicated in Section 1, the Collective had agreed that it was not going to offer programs to reach women at what they called "consciousness-raising level I." In addition, they had begun to talk about "target" groups they specifically wanted to reach. The two groups most consistently identified included "lesbians" and "teachers/educators".

[7] One of the two women originally hired ended up "walking out" midstream, according to one Collective member, because of conflict she was having with another Collective member. The problem was described in terms of the woman hired "not being able to talk about her feelings."

[8] The term "women's community" is commonly used by feminists to refer to those women in a local area considered to be feminists who are associated by a loose network of social and political ties. How the women's community is defined may vary from place to place. In the case of the women associated with Maiden Rock, references to the women's community seemed to include mostly lesbian-feminists who were connected through a variety of feminist institutions and organizations, e.g., a women's coffeehouse, a women's bookstore, a lesbian women's center, and a political organizing group, a women's health club, a feminist therapy collective, and various feminist and lesbian-feminist publications.

[9] More than for the other sections of the analysis, the discussion of organizational dynamics raises issues about the status and behavior of individual Collective members. Therefore, Section 3 includes some references to specific individuals (with the use of an anonymous initial) as a way of illuminating the analysis.

C H A P T E R V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of Chapter V is to present summary and conclusions regarding the present study of alternative feminist education. Chapter I identified three central questions around which the present study has been organized: (a) how does alternative feminist education differ from traditional male-dominated education, (b) how does its form and content reflect feminist analyses of women's oppression, and (c) to what extent does it contribute to an effective strategy for challenging women's subordinate status within the dominant educational system and in the larger society.

To answer these questions, Chapter V is divided into two major sections. The first uses the framework of the review of the literature to highlight the distinctiveness of Maiden Rock from the male-dominated educational system. The second part raises additional concerns and questions emerging from the analysis in Chapter IV regarding the potential of alternative feminist educational programs to contribute to an effective strategy for change.

Summary: The Distinctiveness of Alternative Feminist Education at Maiden Rock

Ideology of women's education.

Historically, the expansion of women's educational opportunities have rarely, if ever, been motivated by a primary concern with women's development as autonomous human being. Attitudes towards women's education have been influenced by the dominant ideology regarding "women's place" in the larger society. In spite of certain historical variation, this ideology has been marked by a consistent regard for women as men's inferior and the assumption of a separate female "nature" which suits women to be subordinate helpmates and companions to men in both the private and public spheres. The translation of this ideology into thinking about women's education has resulted in the channeling of women into pursuits complementary to rather than conflicting with the studies and careers of men. This has been accomplished through both the exclusion of women from certain male institutions and through the funneling of women into separate classes, colleges, and courses when admitted to "co-ed" institutions.

As the review noted, the major deviation from this dominant cultural ideology was reflected in the elite women's colleges founded on the east coast in the nineteenth century to "prove" women's equality with men by showing them capable of the same intellectual pursuit. Accepting the standards of the male colleges as the hallmark of a "superior" education, the women's colleges assumed that access to such education would be sufficient to overcome women's subordinate status in the larger society.

Yet history proved these assumptions to have been both naive and elitist.

In contrast, the ideology of women's education at Maiden Rock is premised on the acknowledgement that women are regarded as the second sex within patriarchal culture and within the male-dominated educational system. Maiden Rock neither accepts the notion of a separate "women's place" as just and natural nor denies the fundamental rootedness of her secondary place in the total social, economic, and political fabric of society. Rather, Maiden Rock starts from the premise that feminist education must encourage women to critically examine the embedded patriarchal assumptions regarding women's place in order to empower women to break through limiting male-imposed definitions. Rather than shaping women's education to complement the interests and pursuits of men, Maiden Rock sees feminist education as a vehicle for enabling women to define their collective needs and interests independent of men. There is no "larger" institutional purpose, no greater goal than enhancing women's ability to gain more control over the directions of their lives, to become active agents in shaping a culture which rewards and recognizes the value of women.

Central to this goal is the belief that women must intentionally remove themselves from the primary influence of male authority, from the everyday expectations and social relations of patriarchal culture. This "removal" is considered crucial for women to have the freedom to critically examine the dominant assumptions about female nature and experience; in addition, this removal provides women with an opportunity

to discover and create new modes of being and learning based on female defined priorities and understandings. Rather than trying to emulate male models of education, Maiden Rock sees the need for new forms of teaching and learning which respect and acknowledge the particularity of female experience and which best facilitate women's understanding of that experience.

Curriculum.

Within the male-dominated educational system, students learn to view the white male experience as normative and universal while women's lives are relegated to marginal if not obscure status. From the stereotyped pictures in children's textbooks, to the omission and distortion of women in the study of history, literature, social science, etc., women and particularly working class and minority women are denied a true reflection of their own experience within the mainstream curriculum.

These biases result from the very methods and assumptions of the academic disciplines and the accepted standards of legitimate knowledge. The way in which problems are defined, the implicit assumptions about what is worth knowing, and the canons of research all reflect the interests and unconscious sexist ideology of white privileged males who dominate the academic disciplines. Yet, the ideals of "value-free" research and academic neutrality have legitimized these pervasive biases contributing to the perpetuation of women's subordinate status within the larger society. In addition, the compartmentalization of knowledge, the fragmentation of facts from values, reason from emotion, thought

from action, the personal from the theoretical, have hindered women's understanding of the nature of their experience and the roots of their oppression. In the process, women's own experience has been denied as well as those ways of knowing traditionally associated with "the feminine."

In diametric opposition, at Maiden Rock, the study of women's lives ("lending the eye to the woman") is at the heart of the educational enterprise. Any dimension of women's lives is considered a "legitimate" focus of study and there are no constraints of separate departments and disciplines. Intentionally, women with varied intellectual training, areas of expertise and perspectives are encouraged to co-facilitate educational programs to develop a more holistic approach to the study of female experience. There are no dominant paradigms or accepted theories which must be accommodated or rigorously challenged before experimenting with new approaches to exploring women's experience, thereby enhancing what Rich (1975) called the "radical reinvention of subject lines of inquiry." (p. 30)

The approach to subject matter at Maiden Rock also highly differs from that within the traditional educational system. Rather than relying on (male) expert analysis and "outside" sources, Maiden Rock considers feminist education a "mode" of education which relies heavily on women drawing from their own experience, their own understanding of their lives, as a way of developing broader analysis. Sharing from the personal is neither tangential nor irrelevant but constitutes a core part of the subject matter, which when shared collectively becomes a basis for generating broader understanding of women's lives.

In its approach to the study of women at Maiden Rock, feminist education rejects the ideal of "academic neutrality." There is no place for a detached scholarship which does not have implications for how women define and live their lives. Neither are students asked to separate themselves from subject matter in order to remain "objective". On the contrary, women are asked to engage with the material at both the personal and subjective levels, bringing to the analysis discussion of individual experience and feelings. Ultimately, the goal of "understanding" is for women to become more intentional shapers of their lives.

Social relations of learning.

In addition to curricular focus, alternative feminist education at Maiden Rock is distinguished from that of the dominant system in terms of the social relations of learning. In place of the emphasis on individual achievement and the fostering of competitive relationships among students, participants at Maiden Rock workshops encounter a highly supportive atmosphere and an emphasis on collective learning. The absence of an external reward system means that participants are not placed in the objective position of competing for grades, credits, and degrees; and that a major source of teachers' traditional power over students is eliminated. In addition, the emphasis on "emergent" structures and flexibility, as well as the use of co-facilitators, lessens the singular authority of teachers and encourages women to become active agents in their own learning. All of these factors contribute to a situation in which "teachers" and "students" experience themselves engaged in a mutual learning process in which their roles are often interchangeable.

A critical part of the alternative social relations of learning at Maiden Rock is the creation of an environment in which women experience themselves as part of a "community of women"--independent of men. Central to this experience is the sense of trust and intimacy facilitated between and among facilitators and participants, which breaks through the barriers which traditionally divide students in classes. Of utmost importance, the temporary community is designed to encourage women to seek intellectual stimulation, support and validation from other women, rather than from men. Minimizing women's traditional reliance on male experts and authority figures, Maiden Rock seeks to enhance women's appreciation for what they have to learn from other women.

Social structure of the organization.

While the "form" of feminist education has been discussed in terms of the social relations of learning and the emphasis on "process", another dimension of form has to do with the organizational context. It is in terms of this organizational structure and "culture" of the institution that feminist education at Maiden Rock is further distinguished from the dominant educational system. Within mainstream institutions, women have little direct control over resources, policy and decision-making, and their activity is circumscribed by male-defined priorities and standards. Particularly within higher education, women find themselves concentrated at the lower ends of the reward, status, and power hierarchies, relatively isolated from one another and dependent on identification with the interests of higher status males for their own rewards and recognition.

By operating "outside the patriarchy" as an autonomous feminist organization, the Maiden Rock Collective is not accountable to any higher bureaucratic (male) authority and has the freedom to develop its goals and programs according to its own priorities and commitments. If there is any sense of accountability, it is to the surrounding "women's community" considered the program's primary basis of support.

Fundamental to the organizational structure of Maiden Rock is the rejection of a bureaucratic and hierarchical division of labor and decision-making. Each Collective member is assumed to have an equal voice in decision-making and to share responsibility for the overall functioning of the program. There is no professional ladder, no formal distinctions of status and prestige and the program follows a basic principle of rewarding women on an equal basis for their work.

Whereas the university environment, specifically the academic career, is characterized by a highly competitive, individualistic and entrepenneurial style, Maiden Rock is committed to an organizational structure based on mutual trust and support developed through engagement in collective activity. Rather than demanding the separation of personal from work life, Maiden Rock has developed as a more "total" (Mansbridge, 1973) institution in which social and emotional needs of the women involved are expected to be met in addition to the accomplishment of more instrumental activity. Maintaining mutually supportive relationships (particularly with reference to the Collective) is an organizational goal in addition to (and sometimes over and above) offering specific educational programming. The personal meaningfulness of these

relationships thus becomes a significant factor in cementing women's commitment to the program.

Conclusions

Having summarized the distinctiveness of alternative feminist education at Maiden Rock, the following section raises additional questions and concerns regarding the full potential of such programs to contribute to an effective strategy for change. The discussion is organized around four central issues which emerge from the analysis in Chapter IV: (a) the importance of "process" and the focus on the "personal" in feminist education, (b) the meaning of creating a community of women, (c) audience and political impact of the program, and (d) alternative organizational structure and dynamics.

The importance of process and the focus on the personal.

The methods and subject lines of inquiry at Maiden Rock represent a clear alternative to the curriculum within the male-dominated educational system. Two dimensions of the curriculum merit further consideration: (a) the basic conception of feminist education as a "mode" or process of learning rather than a particular content, and (b) the elevation of the personal and subjectivity as the primary sources of women's understanding and knowledge.

Collective members argued that "anything" dealing with female experience could be studied using feminist process; that the method of feminist education is more important than particular subject matter.

At the same time, the program has had to make choices regarding the substantive focus of workshops. While the Collective has spent significant time developing their ideas regarding feminist process, there has been less explicit articulation regarding the question of what subject matter is most important for feminist education to address in the struggle to effectively challenge "the patriarchy."

One important reason for further analyzing the issue of subject matter is that the choice of workshops topics partially determines who it is that will be attracted to the educational programs. It may be true, for example, that workshops on "lesbian sexuality," "organizing women workers," "journal writing," "women in the professions," and "the politics of marriage" could all be approached using the methods of "feminist process." However, each of these topics focuses on certain kinds of women's experiences and would be likely to attract different kinds of women. While all of these subjects might be appropriate within a total feminist curriculum, the decision to offer any one group or another does reflect certain priorities and basic assumptions.

The PPG addressed the question of subject matter in their deliberations which led to the "invention of the wheel." (See p. 169.) Also, the 1977 summer course brochure did provide a more explicit rationale for why particular substantive workshops were included in the program. Still during the research period, when the Collective began making plans for the upcoming program, the members argued that what really held the workshops together was the approach of feminist process, i.e., learning from the inside out, women telling their stories, learning in a

collective context of women. At that time, other criteria affecting the choices included: what had been successful in the past, what the Collective members were personally most interested in, and the desire to reach out to lesbians and to feminist educators (the latter criteria most clearly reflecting conscious priorities).

It is understandable that the Collective would not want to repeatedly "invent the wheel" and that practical questions, e.g., availability of facilitators, or what had been successful in the past would enter into planning. By continuing to view "process" as the critical element in the educational program, however, it seems the Collective would be less likely to continue developing their thinking about the priorities in selecting subject matter. While such priorities obviously entered into the Collective's deliberations, making them more explicit would seem to further strengthen the overall integration of the curriculum.

Another central dimension of the Maiden Rock curriculum has to do with the regard of the "personal" and subjectivity as the primary sources of women's knowledge and understanding. The positive aspects of validating and integrating these ways of knowing into a full approach to the study of female experience have already been amply discussed. At the same time, the primary emphasis on analysis of personal experience, particularly within feminist education, has certain limitations.

One reason is that for many women, it is <u>easier</u> to remain on the level of personal experiences and feelings rather than to discuss theory and/or political strategy. In part, this is because of the "uneven" development imposed on women within patriarchal culture, i.e., that

which has limited them to the realm of subjectivity. Feminists have rightly criticized the dominant educational system for channeling women into pursuits considered "appropriate" to female temperament. It would seem to be important that feminist education not err on the side of re-creating or reinforcing women's relegation to the world of feelings and subjectivity in the process of validating those ways of knowing as crucial for complete human understanding.

Without accepting uncritically male defined standards of legitimate and "objective" knowledge, feminist education must facilitate women's going beyond the sharing of feelings and personal experiences in order to develop the kind of analysis which will help direct strategies for change. Addressing this issue, in an informal correspondence on feminist education (not specifically in terms of Maiden Rock), a former PPG member and Women's Studies teacher, Cheri Register, wrote:

> We manage to avoid looking at the condition of women in the abstract, in a structured analytical framework, partly because we are still reacting against the excesses of abstraction in the male-dominated Left and in the academic world, and partly because it's so much easier to just make observations at the individual level. . . . at some point, we must begin to gather up all the personal data we have collected and to analyze it theoretically, in order to develop a strategy that does not rely simply on personal, individual solutions.

Writing on feminist teaching, Elshtain (1976) raised a similar concern. She argued that while individual women's life experiences must be taken seriously in the development of critical understanding of women's oppression, those experiences must be analyzed through the use of conceptual categories and systematic thinking, without which women cannot transcend what is immediately perceived and understood.

Related to the emphasis on the personal is the concept of "learning from the inside-out" and the thinking, as one Collective member put it, that "women understand everything about [the patriarchal] system and how it works. . . and have the answers for ourselves and inside ourselves." At the most positive level, this notion validates the knowledge that women themselves have about their experience which has been historically disregarded in favor of theories of (mostly male) "experts". At the same time, however, what some women already have "inside themselves" is a product of formal education, extensive training, and/or special experience. Not all women have this same background to draw from. The emphasis on learning from "the inside" tends to obscure these real differences which do exist among women. To consider "book learning" as only an extra complement to personal knowledge denies the real advantage formal education can provide women as a tool for developing feminist analysis.

In fact, the evidence collected on Maiden Rock reveals that facilitators (and participants) do introduce "outside" materials which is very important to the total understanding which is generated within particular workshops; that the workshops are not solely centered around the sharing of feelings and personal life experiences. The tendency to minimize the importance of that "outside" material seems to come from the desire to equalize the significance of each woman's contribution to the learning process. Yet through such denial, feminists themselves can create myths of equality which obscure real differences among women resulting from unequal access to intellectual preparation and training.

Rooting feminist education in the analysis of the personal can also be limiting if the pool of experience being drawn from is relatively homogenous. In other words, a workshop on "how money handle women" might evolve a very different analysis depending on the age, race, and class composition of the participants. While there seems to be a significant variation in the age range of Maiden Rock program participants, the audience is basically white, middle class.

Feminists have been made to feel guilty about the race and class composition of the active women's movement since the sixties. Very often, such criticism has been used by white males to discredit the movement and has implied that the concerns and oppression of white middle class women are insignificant compared to the "real" oppression of race and class. It is crucial for feminists to reveal the real motives behind such external attacks as a reaction against women coming together to define their collective interests. At the same time, it is also essential for feminists to develop ways of trying to bridge the gaps in the authentic understanding of the life experiences of non-white and working class women. To do this, it seems critical for white middle class women to, in fact, be able to step outside of their own lives to go beyond their personal experiences in order to understand how women's lives have been made different as a result of profound race and class divisions. Following this thinking, it is difficult to envision, for example, how a group of middle class women could come to understand the history of women workers and the labor movement by learning from "the inside-out." If the stories women have to share with one another are

similar in terms of race and class (as well as age, sexual preference), the resulting analysis may reflect only a portion of the total spectrum of female experience.

During the winter of 1978-79, two Native American women participated in the Maiden Rock "wise women" series. This was the first time that minority women had been directly involved with the program. The Collective members were clearly pleased about the participation of these women and expressed the desire to develop more programs which would speak to the lives and concerns of minority women.

At the same time, some Collective members indicated that they felt it would be presumptuous and probably ineffectual for the program to talk of reaching working class and/or minority women unless such women were also directly involved in program planning. Given the current structure of Maiden Rock, it is not likely that many third world and/or working class women would see the program as a priority. Barring such diversity in actual program participants, it seems particularly important that feminist education develop methods and curriculum which will allow white middle class women to develop fuller insight into the lives of women of different race and class backgrounds. It is useful for women to begin analysis of female experience by looking at their own lives and coming to understand how they have been shaped and defined by the culture. It is also important at some point to move beyond such analysis of the personal to incorporate an understanding of the real differences (as well as similarities) in the lives of women of different race and class backgrounds.

Before concluding this section, it is important to add that it is not clear whether the various concerns raised in the preceding discussion surface more from the rhetoric of feminist education used by women involved with Maiden Rock or from actual practice within the program. Interviews with facilitators and workshop participants indicated, for example, that issues of class were raised in at least some workshops. Other comments also indicated that again, in at least certain workshops, there was explicit acknowledgement of the particular insight and knowledge individual women had to share with others as a result of their training and/or extensive experience.

A more detailed analysis of the actual development of substantive issues within a larger cross section of Maiden Rock workshops (beyond the scope of the present research) might have illuminated such questions of actual practice. Such analysis might clarify what is actually meant by the reference to the information which women "already have inside themselves." It would also be possible to examine how the kinds of questions asked, the implicit assumptions and values reflect race and class background. Furthermore, such analysis might reveal how "outside" study and training is brought to bear on the substantive materials generated from the analysis of women's own personal experience.

On the issue of community.

As the analysis in Chapter IV indicated, one of the most important aspects of the Maiden Rock educational experience is the creation of a temporary community of women undivided by male presence and removed from

direct male authority. Within this community, participants have an opportunity to discover the similarity of their concerns and interests with those of other women. The data clearly support the conclusion that women leave Maiden Rock workshops feeling a sense of connection and commonality and an appreciation of what they have to learn from other women. Yet, there is an "underside" to the ease with which feelings of community are fostered at Maiden Rock which reflects certain limitations of the program.

To illustrate this point, it is useful to consider the comparison made by one former PPG member of her experiences as a participant and facilitator at Maiden Rock workshops to those she had as a student in the nine-month alternative masters arts program at the Feminist Studio Workshop in Los Angeles. Essentially, she said that she had experienced a "tighter", more spontaneous feeling of community at Maiden Rock workshops than she had at the California program, even though the latter experience was ultimately more intense.

At the Feminist Studio Workshop, women were involved in ongoing, intensive, creative, and productive work. They engaged in individual as well as collective work projects, mutual criticism sessions, consciousness-raising groups, community meetings, and other informal activities. The program was their major involvement for nine months. In contrast, participants in Maiden Rock workshops make a relatively limited commitment to the program and to other participants. Women may become fully engaged during the course of a workshop--sometimes at intense personal levels--however, participants are not asked to make a

primary investment of time, energy, and money. Maiden Rock participants do not pursue independent projects; they are not evaluated on their participation; and they are not (for the most part) engaged in concrete collective work. In other words, participants' own activity, abilities, and commitments are not put on the line. It is, therefore, not only feminist principles at Maiden Rock which facilitate the creation of a noncompetitive and mutually supportive environment, but also that minimal demands are made of program participants; there is not a lot at stake.

The creation of authentic community in a society which rewards competition, individual versus collective achievement, independence over interdependence is difficult at any level. Fostering genuine as well as reliable support among women whose relationships have historically been mediated through families, social activities, and relationships to men, confronts particular problems (Raven, 1976, p. 3). Evidence of this difficulty is reflected in some of the tensions which have existed between Maiden Rock and the surrounding "women's community" in the Twin Cities area. For example, there were the varied reports of the resentment certain women in the area felt because they thought Maiden Rock had not acknowledged their contribution to the barn renovation project. There were also reports of resentment over the private ownership of the farm, i.e., feelings that the owner was ultimately reaping the benefits of the work and financial support community women gave to Maiden Rock. Others criticized Maiden Rock for charging too much money for workshops; or for not doing more to respond to other needs and interests of women in the community.

The purpose of raising these issues is not to condemn Maiden Rock for having failed to meet all the varied concerns and interests of women in the surrounding community (which would be impossible for one program to do anyway). Rather, these examples are used to illustrate how difficult it is, in fact, to build a real community of interests and mutual support even among feminists who espouse many shared political and social commitments. (At another level, the very difficulties the Collective itself had in creating a viable organization which could meet individual women's needs reflect some of the obstacles to building lasting community.)

The experience of mutual support and commonality of concerns with other women is real for many of the Maiden Rock workshop participants. These feelings are not illusory but are grounded in the concrete experience (particularly at the overnight workshops) of collectively giving shape to a learning experience; they reflect the discovery of shared feelings and interests. At the same time, within the typical weekend format of most workshops, some of the real differences which do often divide women's interests from one another may not have time to surface. (Interestingly, the few reports of conflict within workshops were in reference to the longer overnight programs, supporting the suggestion that the time element may be significant.) Ultimately, such differences must be addressed honestly if feminist education is to have the potential to foster a sense of durable trust and common purpose necessary to survive the difficulties of creating change within the larger society. From an optimistic perspective, one important function of a program like

Maiden Rock may be to provide women with an opportunity to experience the basis of their common interests when, in fact, the stakes are not that high. Such an experience of what "might be" may help to sustain women in the more difficult task of working to meet women's collective interests within the context of their daily lives.

Maiden Rock did originally plan for a more extended educational program (the first summer's six-week session which was canceled due to low enrollment) which would have been a more developed experiment in creating feminist community and new social relations of learning. In hindsight, it seems the program may have been too ambitious for the first season. Factors such as the high cost ($500), the time commitment, the ambiguity of program goals, and schedule as described in the publicity as well as the newness of Maiden Rock may all have been significant in the low enrollment. In fact, the barn renovation project in the spring of 1976 may have come closer to the model of a viable, extended feminist learning experience than what the Collective had designed for the six-week session. The project was concrete, the goals and purposes clear, and the opportunity to learn and/or improve specific skills readily apparent. A more reflective evaluation of the renovation project might actually provide important insights into the kinds of elements that might make an extended learning project more viable.

The question of audience and political impact.

Two other issues important to consider in making a final assessment of the Maiden Rock program as a viable strategy for change are those of (a) audience and (b) broader political impact. Even with its

philosophy of "intentionality", the Collective's approach to the question of audience has sometimes been less defined. By continuing to think in terms of "discovering" who is attracted to the program, the Collective has overlooked ways in which they themselves have influenced this pattern, e.g., through the language they have used, the type of publicity they have done, and the substantive focus of specific programs. As a result, the program has sometimes set up a self-fulfilling prophecy without being explicit about their own priorities.

A reflection of this dynamic was apparent in the scheduling of the workshop for feminist educators (see pp. 151-152) for the 1978 summer season. Although they received advice that teachers would be less inclined to attend a program at the farm (for whatever reasons), the Collective originally planned to schedule the workshop there because they thought the overnight experience would be more interesting. Yet, in terms of reaching out to teachers, it seems a more effective strategy would have been to plan the workshops at a time and place that would have been most convenient and accessible for that population.

On at least one occasion, the Collective did deliberately schedule a workshop in a special location (and for a reduced cost) to attract a particular group of women. The occasion was the scheduling of a "lesbian sexuality" workshop in conjunction with an alcohol treatment center for lesbians. The Collective had already run a similar workshop at the farm but assumed that women involved in the center would not have been likely to attend the earlier program because of cost and location. Because the program was interested in trying to reach this particular

lesbian population, they made a special effort to make the workshop more accessible. In this case, obviously, the Collective sacrificed the more total atmosphere of the farm in order to more effectively reach out to a particular group of women.

There is often a fine line between consciously designing programs which are less threatening and more likely to reach a wider sector, and simply accommodating to standards of "acceptability" which feel compromising. Legitimately, the Collective did not want to "water down" or compromise their values and commitments in order to attract a broader audience to the program. By clarifying further who they most wanted to reach, the Collective could more deliberately structure and advertise programs in a way most likely to attract those women.

Over time, Maiden Rock has become clearer about who they wanted to reach and the process of articulating their primary commitments has been a positive development. This kind of clarifying was evident, for example, in the discussions of the program planning for the 1978 summer season. At that time, the group agreed that two priorities were to develop programs to reach lesbian feminists as well as feminist educators. While such decisions narrowed their efforts in certain ways, they served the useful function of helping the program to develop a stronger sense of its real commitments.

In addition to the issue of audience, another dimension of the program's wider reach has to do with the broader impact it has had beyond the boundary of individual workshops. In speaking to this issue, it is useful to return to the discussion of the political impact of the Maiden

Rock programs first discussed in Section I of Chapter IV. It is useful to consider three different ways in which the Maiden Rock programs might be considered "political". These include: (a) affecting individual consciousness by making women more aware of the power relationships which define female experience, e.g., in terms of sexuality, work and cultural expression, (b) having explicit substantive discussion of political theory and strategy, and (c) facilitating initiation of or involvement with ongoing political action.

Most consistently, it seems, Maiden Rock workshops can be considered political in the first sense of affecting individual women's consciousness of themselves within patriarchal culture. In the words of one Collective member quoted earlier, "understanding the politics of our lives, through women's stories, and beginning to see things in a political perspective." This change in individual consciousness is what Maiden Rock women referred to when they spoke of participants no longer seeing themselves as special or different, i.e., coming to define their interests collectively with those of other women. Through such changed or developed political consciousness, individual participants in Maiden Rock workshops potentially become more effective change agents within the context of their own daily environments.

Maiden Rock has also sponsored a variety of workshops having as their central focus the discussion of political theory and strategy. However, these workshops have often been under-enrolled and have been considered generally unsuccessful by Collective members. Maiden Rock women clearly see the importance of linking up the creativity and vision

which emerge from the exploration of female identity, cultural forms, and values with efforts to create social, political, and economic change. As they themselves wrote in the 1977 summer course brochure, "what we learn and teach [must be] not only 'self-enrichment' but a real contribution towards changing the status of women as individuals and as a class." How to design educational projects which can facilitate women's discussion of theory and strategy without seeming abstract and/or unrelated to personal lives is a task which Maiden Rock and other alternative feminist educational programs still need to pursue if such experiments are to become more than "oases" in the patriarchal landscape for those who have access to them.

It is in the third sense of "political", i.e., the linking up of feminist education to direct collective action, that the Maiden Rock programs have been most limited. While the Collective members talked about the desire to structure in more follow-through on individual workshops, the program has not found ways to consistently do this.

The one exception to this rule is a women's music group which had continued to meet over a several year period as an extension of an original Maiden Rock workshop. While this group was not focused on direct political action, it clearly represents an example of Maiden Rock having helped to facilitate independent collective action among women. In addition to the specific topic area, it is interesting that the music group differed from most other Maiden Rock workshops in that it originally met over a six-week period instead of the usual condensed weekend format. It seems very possible that because of the longer meeting

period, the group developed a greater sense of cohesion which contributed to the decision to continue meeting.

While much creative energy and enthusiasm seems to be generated in the condensed weekend Maiden Rock workshops, such a format does not really allow for sustained relationships to develop among participants. While not all the Maiden Rock workshops would lend themselves to the kind of ongoing development which the music workshop stimulated, it does seem possible that many more might generate such spontaneous offshoots if participants had more opportunity to develop relationships with one another over time.

Organizational structure.

Ultimately, the success of alternative feminist educational programs such as Maiden Rock depends on their ability to create and sustain a viable organizational structure to carry out the program goals. Similar to many other alternative organizations, Maiden Rock has experienced two broad types of problems with respect to organizational viability. These have been related to: (a) the tension between meeting internal personal needs and interests of Collective members and the commitment to develop the educational program, and (b) the resolution of such internal organizational issues as leadership, division of labor, and decision-making.

Part of what makes Maiden Rock an alternative organization is the commitment to maintaining personally rewarding and egalitarian relationships. Yet at critical points, the desire to "keep the meetings nice,"

i.e., to maintain the sense of internal community and intimacy has inhibited the development of organizational structures which would better enable Maiden Rock to build a more stable and fully developed educational program. Mansbridge (1973) discussed the positive aspects of feminists' more typical concern with affiliative and maintenance activities in terms of being in a better position to weather the strains and frustrations of collective work. The analysis of Maiden Rock suggests, in addition, however, that these commitments can also compete with the effort necessary to successfully carry out more instrumental goals.

In their study of alternative community health programs, Holleb and Abrams (1975) concluded that the pressure exerted by a growing clientele that wanted services was one of the strongest factors forcing these organizations to modify the informal "family type" atmosphere originally fostered within them. That is, as programs received more money, hired staff and expanded their services, they found they could not maintain the same informal internal structure. In contrast, it seems that Maiden Rock has never really experienced significant external pressure to expand and/or to "deliver services."

Rather, the Collective has chosen to cut back on programming at different points in order to devote more time to internal development and sustaining supportive relationships. Perhaps the clearest example of this dynamic was evident in the merger between the remaining PPG members and the original Collective in the third year. Rather than trying to further elaborate and clarify structures for decision-making, division of labor, accountability and responsibility to overcome the

problems which had surfaced between the two structures, the group chose to reestablish the informal procedures and internal intimacy which had characterized the original Collective. While increasing the time devoted to personal sharing, the Collective chose to limit explicit program planning efforts.

EPILOGUE

Phone calls to several Collective members in May of 1979 revealed that Maiden Rock had undergone some significant changes since the time of the initial research project. At that time, it seemed the Collective was at a potential turning point having come through a period of months in which there was limited energy, minimal programming, and several "leaves of absence" of different Collective members. Internal problems had reached a point where various women were feeling disappointed and angry about the organization and these were just beginning to be aired. Describing the state of affairs, one Collective member commented, "There just isn't the same glue. . . there isn't the energy. . . . We're not running strong."

Each of the women I talked to had slightly different interpretations of the events and changes which had transpired, although there were also some common perceptions regarding several major issues. Drawing from these conversations, I will highlight what appeared to be the most significant changes in the program.

One of the changes each of the women mentioned was the "turning in" of the Collective since the fall of 1979, i.e., the group's decision "to do for ourselves," "not to offer things that didn't really come from us, from our interests." Rather than seeing themselves as developing programs which would meet the needs and interests of other women, the Collective women had come to an agreement that they were primarily committed to creating a context for pursuing their own personal concerns.

While this shift was described as a change, at least one woman felt that the Collective had finally acknowledged what, in fact, had been going on for some time. "It was obvious that that's what we were doing, and we decided to name it!"

Contrary to what was hoped, while the Collective decided to "pull in," the group experienced a decline in energy and a certain fragmentation. Part of this resulted from significant changes individual women were experiencing in their personal lives (e.g., one woman was involved in intense therapy, a household of three women had gradually split up, including two women who had been lovers). In addition, interpersonal tensions among three of the Collective members had reached the point that their joint presence was hampering the functioning of the group. These changes had the effect of limiting the time and energy women had to commit to the Collective. While two new women had joined the group in the fall of 1978, by the late spring of 1979, several older Collective members had taken temporary leaves. The result, according to one woman, was that the group had "been away from itself"--had lost some of its earlier cohesion.

At the time that I called, the Collective members had agreed that there was a need for the group to take a more critical look at itself and to evaluate the directions in which it was moving. A first meeting had been held with all the Collective members present, and this represented the first step in the group's effort to pull itself together.

One major consequence of the "pulling in" was a reduction in educational programming. The Collective did not develop a winter/spring

1978-1979 workshop program and scheduled only the evening speakers series. Even the series was somewhat different in that only one participant was drawn from outside the Collective. Having sponsored only one workshop in the fall, Maiden Rock had clearly limited its outreach since the summer of 1978.

Notwithstanding, the Collective had planned a 1979 summer program at the farm which they were in the process of advertising. The character of what was planned, however, differed significantly from that of previous summers. One major change was the Collective's decision to direct the entire program towards lesbian feminists (as the brochure read: "1979 Lesbian Feminist Summer Advance"). The ambiguity regarding the "woman-identified" label had finally been resolved by the Collective coming to define itself clearly as a lesbian feminist organization. All the current Collective members were out as lesbians and they had decided to be explicit about reaching out to other lesbian feminists. Interestingly, one of the women still referred to the group having "discovered" that its most consistent and largest audience was lesbian women as a way of explaining the change.

Another difference in the summer program was the decision not to plan specific workshops or to select facilitators in advance. Rather, women were being invited to come to the farm for any period of time (a day, weekend, or week[s]) during the month of July, according to one woman, "to try to build a sense of community from scratch." Taking the notion of the "temporary removal from the patriarchy" to a more forward looking direction, the 1979 summer brochure describes the program goals

in terms of "creating the matriarchy."

> The Maiden Rock Collective invites all lesbian/feminists to come live in the matriarchy this summer. We don't have a blueprint for how to do this--but we learned last summer at the first lesbian/feminist Summer Advance that we don't need blueprints--women working together and alone can invent systems that work for us, that reflect our values--which is what we mean by the word matriarchy.

To backtrack momentarily, the first lesbian/feminist advance referred to was the special week-long invitational program the Collective had organized the previous summer apart from the regularly advertised workshop series. The Collective had invited lesbian feminists from across the country considered to be in the forefront of the movement for experimenting with new women's cultural forms. Although attended by a relatively small number of women in addition to most of the Collective members, the week was considered highly successful by the program. The Collective members had been particularly pleased with the spontaneous development of content and structure by all of the participants. They were also excited that participants had circulated a rotating journal among themselves after the week at the farm as a way of continuing to elaborate on the ideas and experiences generated during their time together. (Another form of follow-through from the program was that the Collective's current intern was editing the records which had been dept during the week for publication.) The Collective members clearly felt that the week "advance" had generated much creative thinking.

Having had this positive experience in the summer of 1978, the Collective had agreed to limit the external structure imposed on the

1979 summer program. The only preliminary planning they did was to propose a set of themes for each weekend during the month ("games and sports in the matriarchy," "music in the matriarchy," "storytelling in the matriarchy," and "architecture in the matriarchy"). The ways in which these themes would be developed, however, would be left to those women who came to the farm on those days.

In rejecting any advanced planning, the Collective has taken the principles of "emergent" structures and collective participation in the learning process to their ultimate extension. At one level, this change reflects a principled commitment among some of the Collective members to eliminate any imposed structure within feminist learning. It also appeared, however, that there were differing perceptions among Collective members regarding this shift to the unstructured format. At least one woman I spoke with admitted that her own acceptance of this shift was clearly influenced by the pragmatic consideration that such programming clearly required less work to plan; given her competing personal priorities at this time, this was an important factor. At the same time, however, she also expressed her disappointment that the Collective had turned away from developing what she referred to as "radical directed learning" which she felt was both important and possible. Given the "burnout" and internal tensions confronting the Collective during the year, the pragmatic concerns of workload would seem to be not insignificant in bolstering any more principled commitments among the women to limiting external structure.

In certain ways, it seems that the Maiden Rock program has come full circle. That is, through the elimination of external structure and direction, the 1979 summer program replicates the process the Collective itself underwent in its own evolution as a learning group. In other words, the model of feminist learning reflected in the summer program is based on women coming together to evolve new ways of living and learning together unrestricted by the external requirements of the traditional educational system.

In addition, the Collective women themselves seem to be "beginning from scratch" in terms of their having to reevaluate and reassess what makes sense for them to pursue in their development as an alternative women's learning program. What is different, however, is that the Collective has a history of experimentation behind itself. Rather than choosing to formalize certain structures and content, however, the group has opted for an educational format in which new groups of women are continually involved in the process of creating for themselves form and content.

It seems likely that many of the women who attend the 1979 summer program at the farm will encounter a stimulating, creative, and enjoyable experience. It is also possible, however, that the format which worked so successfully the previous summer might be more difficult to translate into the highly flexible and fluctuating month-long program planned for 1979. What seems clearer is that the emphasis on fostering an experience of women's community has remained perhaps the strongest element in the Maiden Rock program.

What is to be made of the Maiden Rock experience? What lessons are there to be learned? At one level, given an organization in which personal ties and relationships formed such an important part of the group's functioning, changes in individual members' private lives and in the quality of those relationships significantly altered the group's ability to carry out more instrumental goals. In addition, the desire to create an organization responsive to personal priorities, interests, and needs seems to have worked against the creation of a more formal program with the ability and commitment to reach out effectively to a wider audience. By the fall of 1978, the Collective had come to accept that its primary commitment was to develop a structure which would allow the members to pursue their own concerns and interests rather than programming to meet the needs of other women. Ironically, the decision to do "more for themselves" coincided with (or precipitated--it's not clear) a loss of energy and lack of clear focus. According to one woman, even with the reduction in formal programming, the Collective had not really done the kind of internal "meeting, learning, and living together" which it had hoped to pursue.

It is also significant that none of the Collective women depended on the program for primary financial support. Almost all of the Collective members were well established in other professional work and were not seeking to support themselves through the program. That most of the women were working on "extra" time seems clearly to have been a factor limiting the potential development of the program.

If one takes as the criterion of success the establishment of a formal and expanding organization or institution, it is tempting to conclude that Maiden Rock as realized in practice has not been a successful experiment in alternative feminist education. The program has never reached a wide audience and its enrollments and educational offerings have been uneven. After four years, rather than having a more solidly developed and expanded "women's learning institute," the Collective had become a more inwardly oriented learning group faced with burnout, personal ander, and disappointment.

Yet, another way of viewing Maiden Rock is to see it as part of a dynamic evolution developing in different parts of the country among different groups of women to give form to new ideas of what feminist learning might be. It seems clear that the "last chapter" has not yet been written about Maiden Rock. While the Collective finds itself in a critical period, i.e., having to work out internal conflicts and reassessing personal commitments, visions, and realistic options, the program may still go through new transformations. In spite of all the problems frankly acknowledged by the women I spoke with, they still expressed a conviction that the program would continue in one form or another. While their optimism about the future was far more guarded than when I had originally visited Maiden Rock, it was still there.

Maiden Rock may not have breathed its last breath, but it does seem clear that the program is not headed, certainly in the near future, to be the major "women's learning institute of the Midwest" that some had envisioned. It may be most appropriate to think of Maiden Rock as

still "in process" currently taking the form of a small internal feminist learning group, still experimenting with models of feminist learning. By itself, Maiden Rock seems fated to remain a small project, reaching a fairly selective and limited group of women. As part of the larger movement described in Chapter I, however, Maiden Rock represents a dynamic element in the process of women creating new organizational structures, cultural forms, and understandings based on female-defined priorities and potentiality.

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A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF ALTERNATIVE FEMINIST EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

FEMINIST EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Program:_____ Person filling out questionnaire:

Address:_____ _____

DIRECTIONS: Please don't be intimidated by the length of this survey; many of the questions will be very easy to answer. Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you do not have the information, or if a question is not applicable to your program, please feel free to indicate this. Also, if for any of the questions you have available relevant literature (forms, descriptions...) please attach them. Thank you.

I. GOALS

1. How important are each of the following in terms of the goals of your program? Please rate each item on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale by circling the number.

A. To provide women with basic survival/job skills	1	2	3	4	5
B. To encourage political organizing	1	2	3	4	5
C. To facilitate personal development	1	2	3	4	5
D. To offer an alternative academic program	1	2	3	4	5
E. Any other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

2. Are there other ways of describing the basic goals and philosophy of your program? Please elaborate. (If described in literature, please attach)

3. Please indicate with a check if your program defines itself politically in any of the following ways.
   A. Radical Feminist ____
   B. Socialist Feminist ____
   C. Lesbian ____
   D. Other (specify) ____

II. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

4. When did the program first begin? _____

5. Please check when courses are offered through your program.
   Summer_____ Fall_____ Winter_____ Spring_____

6. What is the length of each term? (weeks or months) _____

7. How many courses were offered in the most recent term? _____

8. What is the average class size? _____

9. How often do classes generally meet? (# meetings, #hours) _____

10. Does the program have a permanent office or classroom space? Yes___ No___

11. Where do most of the classes meet? (central building, women's homes, YWCA...)

12. Some programs have special "outreach" or extension courses (high schools, other parts of a city...). Does your program have any such courses? Yes___ No___

12. (cont'd) If yes, please describe. 2

13. Approximately what number of the courses offered in the most recent term fall into the following categories?

A. Personal growth (self-awareness, assertiveness...) ____
B. Political theory/analysis and/or organizing strategies ____
C. Basic skills (carpentry, car repair, writing...) ____
D. Women's culture (music, dance, women and spirituality...) ____
E. Crafts ____
F. Job training or career planning ____
G. Women's studies (women's history, women & psychology...) ____
H. Women & Finance (women's businesses, investing...) ____
I. Outdoor experience/Athletics (tennis, wilderness course...) ____
J. Women's Health/ Self-help ____
K. Other ____

14. Have there been any significant changes in the distribution of the above categories since the program began? Yes____ No____
If yes, please explain.

15. Are there any specific criteria which courses must meet for inclusion in the program? Yes____ No____ If yes, please explain.

III. INSTRUCTORS

16. How many instructors/facilitators were there in the most recent term? ____

17. What was the ratio of third world/white instructors? _____ / _____

18. Are instructors paid? Yes____ No____ If yes, how much? _____

19. Many programs have formal or informal criteria for instructor status (e.g. age, education, political philosophy, experience). What are the prerequisites for being an instructor in your program?

20. How are the instructors selected?

21. Is there any orientation for instructors? Yes___ No___ If yes, please describe.

22. Is there any evaluation of instructors? Yes___ No___ If yes, please describe. (If evaluation forms are used, please attach)

IV. PARTICIPANTS

23. Approximately how many women participated in the program in the most recent term?

_____

24. Has the number of participants increased or decreased significantly since the program began? Yes____ No____ If yes, please explain.

FOR QUESTIONS #25, #26, and #27, please use the following percentage (%) scale to indicate the proportion of different types of participants. Mark the appropriate letter in the blank.

A. Under 10% B. 11-25% C. 26-50% D. Over 50% E. Don't Know

25. Approximately what percentage of the participants are in the following age groups?

i. Under 25 _____
ii. 26 - 40 _____
iii. Over 40 _____

26. What percentage of the participants are (there may be overlap here)

i. Students _____
ii. Housewives _____
iii. Wage workers _____

27. Of working women, what percentage are

i. Professional _____
ii. Non-professional _____

28. (Using a different scale) What percentage of the participants are minorities (third world)? Please circle.

A. Under 5% B. 6-15% C. 16-25% D. 26-50% E. Over 50% F. Don't know

29. Please indicate with a check if your program makes any particular effort to attract any of the following groups of women. (may check more than one)

A. Older women _____
B. Lesbians _____
C. Working class women _____
D. Minority (3rd world) women _____
E. Other (specify)_____ _____

If you checked any of the above, please describe briefly what these efforts are.

30. Approximately what percentage of participants tend to enroll in more than one course either within the same term or in subsequent terms? Please circle.

A. Under 10% B. 11-25% C. 26-50% D. Over 50% E. Don't know

V. FUNDING

31. Are there any general program fees or specific course fees? Yes___ No___
If yes, A. Please describe.

B. Please check if there is flexibility in payment in any of the following ways.

i. Scholarship _____
ii. Sliding scale _____
iii. Waiver _____
iv. Other _____ (specify) _____

32. Does the program receive any outside funds besides fees (e.g. grants institutional support) ? Yes____ No____ If yes, please indicate the source and amount.

33. Has the program ever applied for outside money and been denied? Yes___ No___
If yes, please indicate source(s) and amount(s).

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION MAKING

34. As a way of describing the current staffing of your program, please indicate how many individuals fill each of the following positions and whether or not they are paid or volunteer.

	Total #	# paid	# volunteer
A. Director or Co-ordinator	_____	_____	_____
B. Collective or Co-ordinating committee	_____	_____	_____
C. Other paid staff	_____		
D. Other volunteers	_____		

35. Many programs are based on non-hierarchical decision-making. Would you describe your program in this way? Yes___ No___ If no, please explain.

36. What is the ratio of third world/ white staff? _____/_____

VII. AFFILIATIONS

37. Is the program affiliated with any other organization(s) or institution(s)?
Yes____ No____ If yes, which one(s)? _____

In either case, is this a conscious choice of the program? Yes____ No____
Please elaborate.

38. If affiliated with an academic institution, are courses offered for credit?
Yes____ No____

VIII. THE FUTURE

39. Do you forsee any significant changes in program goals or design in the near future? Yes____ No____ If yes, please describe.

40. What change(s) would you be most interested in implementing in your program if you had adequate resources?

41. How stable is the future of the program?

IX. ADDITIONAL

42. Please indicate (by circling) the extent to which each of the following has been a problem for your program. Use a 1 to 5 scale

	Not at all				Very much
A. Funding	1	2	3	4	5
B. Internal political conflict	1	2	3	4	5
C. Outside criticism	1	2	3	4	5
D. Low enrollment	1	2	3	4	5
E. Legitimacy	1	2	3	4	5
F. Relationship to other feminist projects/organizations	1	2	3	4	5
G. Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5

43. What do you consider the major problem facing your organization at this time?

44. Is there any evaluation of the overall program (e.g. policy-making, goals, effectiveness)? Yes____ No____

If yes, A. Are these written____ or unwritten____ (please check)
B. Are these internal____ or external____

45. Please check if any of the original organizers of the program are
A. Still working with the program ____
B. In the local area ____

46. Is there any information not included above which you think would be significant for me to look at or useful for your own program to know about other programs?

47. If you know of any other alternative feminist educational programs (not including women's studies or continuing education programs) please indicate their name(s), address and contact person, if possible.

48. Would you consider participating in the second, more in-depth stage of this study? Yes ____ No ____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROGRAM COORDINATORS

The following interview guide reflects questions which emerged from the three initial areas of investigation as well as from initial review of program literature and meetings with the Collective. Questions were modified, added, and/or deleted depending on the particular role(s) of the women interviewed.

I. Personal Background and Motivation.

a. How did you first get involved with Maiden Rock?

b. Has your participation changed over time?

c. How have you seen your role with the program?

d. Have your personal attitudes and/or visions about the program changed over time?

e. Have you ever wanted to leave the program? (Alternatively, what made you leave the program?)

f. What has kept you working with Maiden Rock?

II. Program Goals and Commitments.

a. What does the program's description in course brochures as "women-identified" women mean to you?

b. The brochures refer to feminist education as "political". What does that mean to you?

c. Who do you want to see the program reaching?

d. How important do you think Maiden Rock's organizational autonomy is?

III. Educational Programming.

a. Which Maiden Rock workshops have you attended as either a participant or facilitator?

b. Describe as fully as you can at least one of the workshops you attended, e.g., in terms of basic format, topics of discussion, participants, highpoint.

c. Thinking of the specific workshop(s) you have attended, what aspects most reflect what you think is distinctive about the "form and style" of feminist education at Maiden Rock?

d. What is the influence of the farm setting on the educational experience?

e. How do you think Maiden Rock's program is similar to/different from other feminist and/or special educational programs for women, e.g., Women's Studies, Continuing Education, other community-based programs?

f. How have the educational programs been planned?

g. Have there ever been any conflicts around programming?

h. How are facilitators selected?

i. What kind of contact is there between facilitators and the Collective (PPG)?

j. What programs do you think have been most successful? Least?

k. What kind of programming would you like to see more of?

IV. Organizational Structure and Dynamics.

a. How has work been divided within the Collective?

b. Have there been any problems with the division of labor?

c. How are decisions made within the Collective?

d. Have there been any conflicts around decision-making?

e. How have the transitions to and from the dual Collective/PPG structure affected the organization?

f. What does the personal sharing at meetings mean to you?

g. What do you think have been the hardest or most significant decisions made by the Collective during the past year?

V. Economic Issues.

a. How do you feel about the program's policy on course fees? Payment of facilitators? Payment of Collective members for administrative work?

b. How successful do you think the system of "energy exchanges" has been in defraying costs for workshop participants?

VI. Relationship to the Broader Women's Movement.

a. What kind of relationships does Maiden Rock have with other feminist activity and organizations locally? Nationally?

b. Where do you see Maiden Rock most aligned in terms of the larger women's movement?

c. What kind of role do you see Maiden Rock playing in terms of the larger women's movement?

d. Have there been any developments in the local women's movement which you think have influenced Maiden Rock's development?

VII. General Evaluation.

a. What is the significance of the cancellation of most of the farm workshops last summer?

b. What do you think are the program's greatest weaknesses? Strengths?

c. Do you think Maiden Rock has had any significant impact on creating change?

VIII. Are there any other thoughts about the program which have surfaced during this interview that you would like to share?

* * * * *

IX. Special Questions for Workshop Facilitators.

a. How did you come to teach the _____ workshop(s)?

b. What kind of contact did you have with the Collective (or PPG)?

c. What kind of contact did you have with other facilitators?

d. Describe as fully as you can the workshop(s) you facilitated.

e. How did you see your role as facilitator? Your relationship to participants?

f. How did you come to co-facilitate the workshop(s)? How did you feel about co-facilitating?

g. How did your workshop(s) fit into the rest of the Maiden Rock program?

h. Are you aware of any spin-offs from the workshop(s)?

i. How did you evaluate the workshop(s)?

j. Have you had any significant criticisms of or differences with the Collective (PPG)?

k. Would you want to facilitate other workshops for Maiden Rock in the future?

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE FIELD NOTES

December 21. Conversation with "E" and "L" over dinner. "E" had invited me to have dinner with her and a friend, "L", who she said had some "different views on Maiden Rock that I probably wouldn't hear from the Collective." "I think it will be interesting for you to hear what 'L' has to say," she told me. I drove to dinner with "E" and there we met "L".

"L" is a long-time feminist activist in the area. She seemed to be in her thirties. Was very forthright in her attitudes. She is a good friend of "E's".

* * * * *

After being introduced, I told "L" that "E" had said she had some particular perspectives to offer about Maiden Rock. I asked her what her contact had been with the program. She described having tried to register for one of the summer workshops ("reconsidering"), but had a frustrating time. Said she found out that the workshop was cancelled because not enough people were enrolled. Suggested this was because the Collective had done a poor job handling phone calls and registration. Said she was interested anyway and had called up the facilitator directly to see if they could arrange something else. They set up a meeting independently at one of the facilitator's house and contacted

the women who had signed up. "Many of us had spent a lot of time in the women's movement, and there was a lot we had to say about where we had come." Said people really got involved with the discussion and agreed to meet again, but they weren't able to pull off the follow-up. "Only three people showed up." She said she couldn't believe that the Collective had already cashed her check for the workshop even though it had been cancelled. (She seemed rather annoyed.)

"L" said she thought scheduling workshops at the farm was a problem "in terms of transportation." "E" added that the Collective "had not made directions easily available last summer." "L" said she thought this was a problem for the workshops in the city as well. She identified the high workshop fees as another problem. About the "reconsidering" workshops, "we thought it was high to have to pay that much" ($45).

"E" added that there were also problems with the farm because they were denied a zoning permit. I asked her to explain. She said the farm was owned by "B" who had been notified by the local zoning board that they needed to apply for a permit as an educational institution. "It was really homophobia." Said the permit was denied. "It was very hard for the Collective." She doesn't know what they'll do now. They've been using the farm "illegally". "I'm not sure what we should do, but 'D' seems to think we can get around it by not publicizing where the workshops will be held."

I asked her about the farm program last summer. "I heard that some of the workshops were cancelled." "E" said only one of the week-long workshops ran--"Our Heritage." I asked how many women attended.

She thought 8 to 10. Said "the Collective tried to reach university students. We thought we might be able to get students to go to Maiden Rock instead of regular university summer courses and could get independent study credit through Women's studies. But this didn't really happen." "L" said she thought that was ridiculous. "How many students would want to stay in Minnesota for the summer and pay the cost of the workshops!"

I said the fee issue seemed to be a common problem with alternative programs. How to charge enough money to cover costs but without eliminating those women you would want to attract. Said, "I was struck by the higher fees charged by Maiden Rock especially for the farm workshops. Most of the other women's schools I'm familiar with charge very minimal fees like $5 to $10."

"E" said the program is having a hard time with money--"operating from hand to mouth." Said she felt strongly that women should be paid decently for doing workshops for Maiden Rock. "I want to pay people more for doing the Arts Skills Workshops. That's why we applied for the grant." "I know that 'A' and 'D' take a different view from me on this issue. They think people should work with Maiden Rock out of commitment to the movement; that people can't expect to get paid competitively." Said she felt real strongly about this; that this issue was a real difference between her and some of the others.

["E" said something about some Collective members not wanting to be open about the lesbian issue because of the fear of jeopardizing possible funding. This is not very clear to me now. I can't quite remember

what she said.]

"E" compared Maiden Rock to a local feminist therapy collective where two of the women work. Said they have become economically self-sustaining. I said something about women maybe being willing to pay for therapy seeing it as a more pressing need than the kind of educational programs Maiden Rock was offering. "E" said she thought the "program was coming up against the problem that there isn't really a market for what we want to do."

I asked "E" about workshops she had facilitated. She said six people came. Added that one of the reasons for lower enrollment she thought was because they had a lot of problem returning people's phone calls. "There's a real problem with the shitwork--the office tasks and answering the phones." I asked what happened to the student intern they had. She said there had been conflict between the woman and "A". "'A' didn't think she was doing enough work." She said that the second intern they had had a kind of breakdown while working with them in the fall. She had lost her student status and couldn't work as an intern. Said it's been a real problem that they don't have an intern now.

"L" said she thought there might be high interest in the Maiden Rock workshops, but repeated that they hadn't worked out the problems of transportation and money. "I think there are a lot of feminists in town who would hesitate about going to Maiden Rock programs." [I'm not clear what she was referring to here.] She said she thought Maiden Rock had a "poor business approach. " E " seemed to try to enlist "L's" assistance in helping her with promoting the Arts Skill

Workshop series, but "L" didn't respond directly. She mentioned three other women who were "high powered" who might be able to help.

"E" expressed concern about being able to get all the work done for the Arts Skills Workshops Series. I asked her if she was primarily responsible. She said she'd be "handling all the phone requests for information. . . . Since I'm getting paid for organizing the project, I think it's fair that I should be assuming more of the responsibility." I thought she sounded overwhelmed. I asked her how that was decided, and she indicated that "A" had told her that she should assume the responsibility of program director and should check for the calls daily. "E" later said she knew she was resisting this because "I don't really like to work in that office." Said it was isolating.

"E" raised the problem with child care. I said I thought it was provided (so it indicated on the brochure). "E" said technically it was, but that "not much effort had gone into arranging child care during the summer." "L" said she thought this was a real problem, that the program didn't attract women with children. Suggested something about the fact that none of the women besides "E" had children. "E" added that "D" also had a child but she didn't have regular responsibility for him. "E" said she had raised the issue of child care, but felt that she hadn't gotten much response from the others. (She sounded frustrated.)

"L" said something about Maiden Rock serving a "recreational" function for the coordinators. "E" asked her to say more about that for me. "L" described her guideline for assessing how effective an

organization is. "You need to ask 'what is this doing for me? For us? And for them? Whose needs are getting met?'" Said she thought Maiden Rock was serving their own interests, "getting together and planning interesting programs." "E" said this had been very valuable for her--to think about Maiden Rock in this way. "I think my attitudes have changed and I think that my involvement really is recreational." (She had come to accept that as legitimate.) "I wonder what would happen if we talked about this in the Collective?" She asked "L" if she would be willing to come to a meeting. "L" said she wouldn't want to take that role.

I asked about the upcoming community forum--whether that might be a place where some of these issues might come up. I asked "L" if she was thinking of going. She didn't answer directly; said she thought it would be the "coffeehouse regulars" suggesting that non-lesbian women wouldn't feel comfortable going there. I began to feel defensive, thinking it should be all right for Maiden Rock to schedule the forum there. It was other women's responsibility to feel comfortable. I started to say something about the program not being able to satisfy all women's needs--that they shouldn't be faulted. I asked "E" whether she thought many women would come. She said she didn't think it was that well organized. She wasn't sure when it was. She also said she thought that two local feminist therapists would also be scheduled for the forum. I said something about that not giving Maiden Rock very much time, that it might get boxed in. She said she thought it was planned for an hour or so. I was surprised to hear this since, from my earlier phone conversation with "A", I had assumed that the forum

was well organized. I was disappointed.

I made a comment about how overwhelming it was trying to deal with all these issues. How so many groups, including ones I had been involved with, had faced similar kinds of problems. "E" said I shouldn't be concerned about these issues. I was just supposed to find out about them.

The conversation trailed at this point. I said I had to get back to meet someone. We soon left the restaurant.

* * * * *

Reflections and Additional Comments

General tone and mood.

I had the feeling that "E" was feeling defensive in response to "L's" criticisms of the program and that she was uncertain and worried about many of the issues raised. Several times she said she thought she wasn't sure if she would continue working with the program past May. She also indicated that her original vision was to be able to survive economically from working with Maiden Rock and that it was becoming clear that that was less and less of a possibility. It seemed that her discussions with "L" helped her to clarify some of her own feelings about the Collective, and also provided her with ideas of how to approach certain problems within the program.

I felt conflicted in the situation. Having questions about my own role in the conversation. To what extent should I just be asking questions? (I could feel myself getting defensive about the Collective in response to "L's" criticisms.) Offering my opinions or giving suggestions, validating what was said. At a certain point, I felt that I needed to check myself from getting into an argument with "L".

I left the conversation feeling somewhat depressed. I felt that suddenly I was confronted with a lot of the weaknesses and problems of the program. I sensed a lot more disorganization than I had last night. Also, I was surprised to hear about the low enrollments. "L's" comments indicated that there is a lot of negative response from certain feminists in the community towards Maiden Rock. She said something about Maiden Rock having tried to get financial support from area feminists, but that the program wasn't being very accountable. "E" also indicated that there were negative feelings about Maiden Rock in the community.

I was curious about why "E" had set up the conversation with "L". She had said she thought it would be helpful for me to hear "L's" perspectives. My sense was that she doesn't share all these questions very directly with the Collective, but I don't really know. In spite of her own doubts, she indicated that she really did enjoy working with the Collective and clearly got many personal benefits.

APPENDIX D

MAIDEN ROCK CURRICULUM

Part I: "Inventing the Wheel": Notes From the First PPG Curriculum Planning Meeting, October 19, 1976

Well, here's what I did from the tape of our last meeting. Listening to us, I got all excited again at how really extraordinary we are. And one thing I haven't put down but which comes through so firmly in the tape is the warmth and humor with which we plan. I note this as part of our own process as we struggle with our task.

NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 2 (remember to vote) 7-9

IDENTITY

--women as self-reflectors (history/art history; identity from past/contemporary
--women's self portraits as artists
--bio-grphas and autobio-graphs to chart self/other ♀ for sense of place
--dance: history of role of ♀; do all kinds of dance
--collage made from chosen objects to show others who we are
--masks: make plaster casts of faces; history of use in cultures; "mask" of beau
--find individual strengths for future placement in revolution (rev. planning)
--♀ active in 1971 movement; effect over time; how changed; if dropped out/why
--sing with director in parts; do performance at end
--♀'s identity through flowers; come as flower with history of uses; plant garde
--how see self vs. how we'd like to see selves/
--identity for working class ♀ as such
--assertiveness training
--identity through making own media images (film collective)

HERITAGE

--mothers/daughters together to reconnect
--Charlotte Perkins Gilmas/ Olive Schreiner (work in single women)
--famous ♀ athletes or adventurers/explorers
--how/why robbed of heritage in past and how still being done; we lose sources
--how our heritage has been passed on; oral/gossip/humor/tales/stories
--how to do oral history
--tape own stories/read other ♀'s; tie to fairy tales
--lesbian novels/poetry; how heritage same as/different from other ♀; lesbians cross-culturally now and earlier
--exhibit/demonstration on weaving/quilting (combine with gossip)
--old wise women (local)
--former ♀ artists
--♀ as healers (historically and presently)
--native ♀ particularly here in mid-west and early
--matriarchies
--cultural models for ♀ (women pilots still alive; Sarah Caldwell, etc)
--hard-core historical stuff

SKILLS

—ladder work; fear of heights; how to climb
—how to use body so can do heavy work better
—buying/using tools; getting basic workshops together
—plumbing/electricity/how to buy house; get loans, etc.
—self-defense and sports
—communication skills/facilitation skills
—nasty (letter) skills—with self-defense
—writing in ♀'s language
—identify more/less developed skills and decide where to go in developing
—caring for athletic injuries
(—group skills together for certain weekends on a theme)
—wood—cutting, choice, fire-building
—camping skills
—food—buying, coops, bread-baking, canning, planting-tending
—household: latches, locks, door knobs, wiring (use someone's house)
—bicycle repair; body fitness; politici of energy
—how to learn to talk with men who fix things for us
—auto mechanics
—video/machines and ♀'s intimidation by them
—graphic skills/printing
—painting/plastering/wallpapering
—financial: income tax, business, books, wills, real estate, investments, insurance
(—as often as possible, really do what we talk about in weekends)

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL PATTERNS

—inner patterns for ♀—meditation
—♀'s spiritual expressions (saints lives, theologians, mystics, healers, witches)
—where ♀'s spirituality is going just now
—how to communicate our spiritual selves to each other
—menopause for feminists—process itself, cultural myths; new rites/rituals to mark this (menopause parties)
—menstruation for feminists—same model as menopause; way to attract young ♀
—how to celebrate as ♀; what to do with void of leaving old forms
—ways of knowing as ♀; how to get beyond dualistic thinking (silent retreats)
—how to deal with death; rituals, history; death we've encountered; our own
—how we feel about bodies (weight, looks, clothes, etc.)
—dance as spiritual/emotional not just physical; tie to religion
—feminist creative experience; what is demonic in ♀
—♀ and physical or mental illness; system's treatment; relaiton to doctors
—leaving institutional religion; feelings of anger/sadness; how/where to deal with
—♀ who haven't had children; what that means; what determines choice
—loneliness
(—don't limit ourselves to any format in these offerings)
—♀'s sexuality: how we see it ourselves in these 3 aspects

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, MATERIAL PATTERNS

- demystifying economics; patriarchy as economic
- collective economics for research, living, childcare, travel, etc.
- marriage—how to move from personal concern to politics of institution; birth-control, abortion
- ♀'s utopias or future visions
- --how to get what we want in these areas
- --how to do collectively; what are they
- --homophobia and capitalism; economics of attitutde towards lesbians/gay men
- how to do analysis of power, etc.; how to research issues for ♀, grantswriting (do one for Maiden Rock)
- (--end these sessions by commitment to do something around topic)
- --incest, rape, prostitution, battered ♀, prisoners
- --strategies for reaching underrespresented ♀; avoid isolation, factions; inter-dependence
- --ways to be critical without being destructive
- --how ♀'s movement parallels/differs from other social movements
- --how other movements, e.g. human potential, humanism, affect ♀'s movement
- --♀ we do not know about; how they do
- --feminist crises and adult patterns of change; transitions with questioning; developmental psychology for women
- --collective dictionary; how to deal with our words

IMPACT ON DOMINANT SYSTEM FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

- how to be "in" professions and not "of" them
- --is feminism possible within institutions
- --future of feminism
- --how we get communication to others (look at own community as example)
- --"show" what we do to outside; sponsor events; go out into city
- --study one such event and see what its impact may be
- --being visible; take message to where ♀ are, e.g. bathrooms, laundramats, buildings in city being torn down
- --women and violence
- --support systems for ♀

WOMEN AS SUBJECT NOT OBJECT

- music ending with politics of performance
- --how ♀ portray ♀ and how men do
- --self-defense and journals--ways to take control of selves
- --survival on college campus for females
- --video/♀'s bodies--as subject not object
- sexuality/love-making with men and women; masturbation
- --recreating mythologies
- --conditioned reacions and how to undo; negative role--do as done to not create n
- --bringing unconscious into consciousness
- --passivity and how to overcome; do together and then stop and comment on how we do
- --basic anthropological study of our local female culture
- --media-watching
- --gathering images of ♀ from media into collages (integrate with identity item on collages); how viewed and how we view ourselves
- --psychological testing and how psychology treats ♀ as objects (calling us subjec
- athletics see ♀ as object; do we want to do same male model of athletics

—how we objectify ourselves

MODELS FOR INTEGRATING PROCESS/TASK

—how to think about solving porblems in old and new ways (classical modes and ♀'s modes)

—how to develop our own process

—hustory of failures of groups; work on task-maintenance leaders; pick task and do it, charting process as go along

—Maiden Rock be service to ♀'s organizations to process other groups' tasks to help them work better; itinerant process/task doers

—new ideas of "flow-chart" for ♀'s groups; e.g. spiral flow chart .

—history of previous local groups written individually by members of group with some emphasis on process

X All new models for assessing groups' effectiveness: feminist education model; C-R model with analysis component; criticism/self-criticism; task or support function for group formation

—how to create effective organizations

Maiden Rock might publish evaluations/critiques of itself

Sherry will be our process/task charter

Part II: 1977 Summer Course Brochure

MAIDEN ROCK
WOMEN'S LEARNING INSTITUTE
BOX 8587 MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55408

MAIDEN ROCK COLLECTIVE

Connie Wolfe
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PROGRAM PLANNING GROUP

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Gerry Perrin
Judith Niemi *(Duluth)*
Linda Stipe
Mary Lee George-Geisser
Rosie Morin
Sherrill Hooker
Toni McNaron

WHO WE ARE We are women. We are women of many different life-styles and backgrounds. We are woman-identified women: we respect ourselves and we take seriously our relationships with other women, whether as mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, lovers, or as members of a women's community. Maiden Rock is one place where we give our energy, material goods, minds, and spirit to other women: in return, we draw our strength from women and learn from each other new ways of being and living. We are committed to building a society that recognizes and rewards women.

WHAT WE DO AT MAIDEN ROCK Maiden Rock is a center for new kinds of learning. We believe that women need to understand the myths that have shaped our lives and learn to live more purposefully and intentionally. Our major goal is to provide a feminist alternative to present educational structures, which, if they deal with women's issues at all, do so within traditional structures. We believe that feminist education has not just a different content from other approaches to education, but has a different form and style. We have found that the community of women present for each session creates an atmosphere of support and sharing which is a unique educational and growthful experience. At Maiden Rock we are concerned about creating new alternatives and finding the power to choose among them.

WHO WILL BE THERE We hope that each week and each weekend the community at Maiden Rock will include women of various life experiences, of different ages, social classes, races, and life styles. We grow strong through understanding our differences and discovering our common experience. All women are welcome. Those who cannot afford the entire cost may contribute time and energy instead. Children are appreciated and invited into the community.

The staff is drawn from the collective, the program planning group, and other skilled women who have joined us. They include women in higher education, women with many practical skills, women in the professions, women from religious, political, and cultural women's organizations. They are women who are making creative choices with their own lives, developing unorthodox skills and knowledge and choosing their own directions.

HOW WE LIVE The Women's Learning Institute is located on a farm in the rolling hills near Maiden Rock, Wisconsin. This setting provides a change from our daily routines and perspectives.

The farm is owned by one woman and shared collectively by many women. In the second year of our growth, accommodations are still simple. Many women from the Twin Cities helped us remodel the first floor of the huge barn for learning, eating, and living quarters. Bring your own sleeping bag or bedding; many women like to bring a tent and camp out in the fields. We have a shower room with hot water available at the farm, and there is a small library and quiet room.

We eat fresh natural foods available in the area. All women at the farm help in preparing meals and other daily tasks.

There is time at Maiden Rock for us to enjoy swimming, nature walks, sports, arts, and crafts. We hope you will share your skills—bring along whatever you need for making music, for sports, or for culture-making.

Judith Niemi

Summer Program

JULY 17, 1977 through AUGUST 20, 1977

In 1977, much of our work has gone into planning five weeks of feminist studies. Women may sign up for any week or weeks separately, or participate in the entire program. If you are a student, independent study credits may be arranged.

Each week begins Sunday evening and ends with Saturday lunch. The cost is $120 for any one week, $220 for 2, $320 for 3, $420 for 4 and $500 for the entire program. The cost includes all meals and allows us to break even. Women who cannot afford the entire cost should contact us about contributing time and skills in place of money. For every 7 women who enroll, we can offer the equivalent of $30 worth of such exchange; for each additional woman, we could offer another $30 work exchange. The fee for children is $25 a week to cover food and utilities. Transportation to and from the farm for any summer programs can be easily arranged and a map will be sent to all who register. For more information, call (612) 822-2241.

We want to share a little about how we created this program. In the fall, the program planning group started thinking about what we as women most need to know, and how we most effectively learn. Several themes emerged, from which we created programs we ourselves would want to attend.

We need to understand the past and the hold it has on us. We also need to learn how to rediscover our hidden past. This learning, broader than history as it is usually studied, is the center of our first week.

Heritage
July 17-23

Since without some sense of history, women exist only in a raw and limited present, we want to explore various aspects of our heritage. We will look at such topics as our place in our own families, our contributions to art and literature, our progress through American political and social history. Additionally, we will trace the history of feminism. By asking certain questions, we can better understand and feel the effects of historical blank-out on each of us personally and on us as a group:

What happens to me if I'm denied my heritage? How is knowing my heritage healing? Why have women been denied our heritage? To whose advantage is it for me not to know my precise history as a woman? How do we go about accumulating such information? Who can we trust in this process? How can we avoid repeating the masculine model for history, i.e., elitist, power-oriented, event-centered? What is the effect of looking at our heritage (influenced by such factors as race, class, age, sexual preference, occupation, religion, roles)? What constitutes cultural artifacts and documents for those wishing to study women's history?

We will combine personal stories (the first level of history), essays about the diversity of women, writing-drawings-quilts and other sewn artifacts, and tapes of older women's lives. We will use ourselves and our time together as a living model for constructing a history, recording who we are and what we do, accumulating objects from our week together, tracing our process as a community in the same place for a period of time (the rudimentary definition of a society).

Facilitators

Sara Evans: Assistant Professor of History, University of Minnesota, teaching women's history. An activist in the feminist movement, writing on the origins of contemporary feminism. Published a children's book with Lollipop Power, which she also helped organize.

Toni McNaron: Associate Professor of English, University of Minnesota, teaching and writing feminist criticism. "As former co-ordinator of a Women's Studies Program, I naturally consider advantages and disadvantages of working within and outside of traditional educational structures."

Connie Wolfe: a feminist therapist; "I believe that we as women can heal ourselves from within."

In our meetings we talk about how to connect learning to personal experience and to our sense of identity as women. Reclaiming our heritage is only one way that we define our identity. We each need to become more conscious of what our sense of identity is, and how we can explore and change it.

Creating a Female-Defined Identity
July 24-30

"Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size." *Virginia Woolf*

In this workshop we wish to look at our identity as it is defined by our culture, and as we define it for ourselves. We are interested in discovering where a women's self-identity comes from, how the ideas we have of ourselves are developed. We all experience objectification—we are bombarded by representations of how we are supposed to look, by the "other's" concept of us. We will explore this image through questions like:

How are women represented by the mass media? How do we react? Where does our sense of identity and our self-image come from? How can we recreate our own images?

We will attempt to reclaim our images and our identities by treating ourselves as subjects, not objects, using several methods. We will create self portraits through body painting, photography, mask-making, and journal keeping. These can reveal how we feel about ourselves, and can be deliberate, positive images. We will regain a sense of our bodies by discussing how our body processes affect us emotionally, mentally, and physically. We will read women's autobiographies and look at women's self-portraits, and compare these images with the expectations of the dominant culture.

Facilitators:

Cynthia Ann LaCoeur: Member of Muse, a Feminist Art Collective, and WARM (Women's Art Registry of Minnesota). M.A. in Art; former member of The Feminist Studio Workshop at the Women's Building in L.A., California. "I am a feminist artist interested in personal process as a way of creating feminist art."

Sandra Menefee Taylor: "My work as an artist and teacher centers around the synthesis of inside and outside. I feel our work as women is much the same."

Connie Wolfe: a feminist therapist: "I believe that we as women can heal ourselves from within."

Other resource women have been invited to share this week with us and will be joining us for day long presentations.

Many of us at Maiden Rock get really excited about insulation, fuel pumps, or sabre saws. Knowing building skills enebles women to create this spece we live in at the farm and our office space in the city. Knowing repair skills gives us more control over our lives, more self-confidence. We see the farm as a good place to combine theory with prectical skills.

Survival Skills
July 31 - August 6

Within family, educational, and societal systems, women are not often given the opportunity or the encouragement to learn and develop practical living skills. On a daily basis, most women use electrical appliances, vehicles, hand tools and work or live in environments that need ongoing maintenance and repair. Can you rewire a lamp? Replace a plug? Do simple plumbing repairs such as replacing pipe, cleaning traps, fixing leaky faucets and toilets? Have you wanted to tune and winterize your own car? Have you ever been stranded with a flat tire, broken fan belt, dead battery? Do you feel comfortable using power tools to build bookshelves, tables, beds, and other home furniture? Do you know how to insulate your home, replace door locks and window panes, cut angles, and ask for hand tools by name? How do you deal with persistent salesmen, silent repairmen, seductive workmen? How do you get your questions answered, deal with intimidation and poor service?

Through workshops and discussion, you will have the opportunity to learn to use hand tools and power tools. You will learn how to make basic home and car repairs and develop assertiveness skill to insure getting what you want as a consumer. Throughout the week, a special emphasis will be placed on building self-esteem and self-confidence. Discussions will focus on examining myths we hold about our capability and beliefs we have about what is acceptable for women to do:

Facilitators:

Linda Gelbmann: Associate Director of First Aid/Water Safety Programs, American Red Cross. Bridges two worlds by working in the city, living in the country. "My interest in self-sufficiency and personal growth led me to the local Vo-Tech where auto mechanics lost its claim as a mystery."

Linda Stipe: Program Director, YWCA at Lyman Lodge. A founding mother of Calamity Contracting, a women's remodeling/repair collective. "Knowing the last turn of a wrench, smelling cedar, feeling my muscles as I pull a saw through wood—I am continually amazed at my joy in using my hands."

Rosie Morin: A founding mother of Calamity Contracting, a women's remodeling/repair collective. "Getting a B.A. in Sociology did not prepare me to be a fixit woman, a carpenter or an auto mechanic. Knowthese skills is essential to our very survival as women."

Gerry Perrin: M.A. in Speech/Theater. Instructor in interpersonal communication and assertiveness skills. "As a home-owner I am keenly aware of my own need to gain practical living skills. As a teacher I am committed to assisting women learn and develop communication skills that will help them feel grounded and sure when sharing feelings, asking for what they want, and letting someone know that inept is not our middle name."

At Maiden Rock we are always concerned that what we learn and teach be not only "self-enrichment" but a real contribution toward changing the status of women as individuals and as a class. For this reason we are interested in studying the social, political, and economic patterns of our culture and how they influence our lives. We want to begin learning how we as women can have an impact on these systems and create fundamental changes. It's an enormous task—the part of it that we went to examine this summer is how we es women view power.

Changing Power Structures
August 7-13

The focus of this week will be how to get and use power within the financial institutions in our area. Our assumption is that we—women—*do went power.* We will ask: What is power? When do we feel powerful and powerless? It is our intention to talk about changing power structures with women who have, or know, power within the established money institutions: Foundations, Federal Reserve Bank, Credit System, Corporations and Small Businesses.

We will develop organizing skills by building networks of accountability between women in these institutions and other feminists . . . "a Feminist Think Tank" and yet more.

Facilitators

Ann Richtmen: Director of Lesbian Resource Center; Associate, Independent Community Consultants; local coordinator, Sagaris (national feminist institution). I'm interested in the how-to's of organizing."

Stella Alvo: currently Staff Director of Day-Care Alliance with Coalition on Children and Youth, Washington, D.C.; fund-raiser; co-author of booklet in series on *Funding for Social Change;* extensive community organizing experience locally and nationally.

What many of us have missed in traditional education is any attention to the emotional and spiritual patterns of our lives. Our bodies, minds, and spirits are not separate, but we have been taught to believe that they are. Gradually we are learning to reintegrate ourselves.

Women's Spirituality
August 14-20

What was the ancient role of women in ritual and spirituality? What was/is/might be the connection between woman's cycles and her spirituality? How are women today reclaiming their own spirituality? What do you want spirituality to do for you? What are the political implications of our developing our own spirituality? This week will focus on the connection between women's cycles and our spirituality. We will look at the significant role women played in ancient ritual and discuss ways in which women today can structure religious and spiritual experience to meet our own needs. The week will begin with participation in an ongoing monthly celebration created by local women, a ritual welcoming the new moon. It will close with a celebration designed by the women at the workshop.

Women divinity students and women interested in developing new ways to meet women's spiritual needs are especially encouraged to attend.

Facilitators:

Mary Lee George-G: M.A. in Linguistics; intensive research and reading in women's issues in general with special emphasis on sexist language. Published writer in prose and poetry.

Terri Hawthorne: photographer with experience in researching and assembling slide shows on women's issues, especially on religion; has a substantial collection of slides of women's art, together with research on same.

"We have been involved in planning a monthly New Moon celebration. We have done extensive research on women's spirituality from pre-patriarchal times to the present. We have survived on the fringe of traditional religion."

Connie Wolfe: a feminist therapist; "I believe that we as women can heal ourselves from within."

Throughout our discussions of the Maiden Rock programs, we try to pay attention not only to what we do, but to how we do it. We're very serious about learning, and we don't believe it is helped by hierarchies, prerequisites, red tape, status games, or grades, or by the artificial separation of learning from "real" life. We are reintegrating our learning with our lives.

Learning at Maiden Rock happens in several ways:

—presentations by women with special skills, experience, and ideas

—readings (usually you will be asked to do these in advance)

—discussions in which we all become teachers and learners, often discovering how much we already know

—living as a learning community. (A facilitator experienced in group processes is always included in the week-long sessions to help us understand our interection.)

In the past year and a half of working to create a center where women come together, we have affirmed our belief in women, and have experienced how supportive women's learning can be. When we share ourselves with each other, everything changes.

Weekend Programs

Maiden Rock is also offering a number of short programs throughout the summer. Most of these are weekends at the farm, beginning Friday evening and ending Sunday after lunch. For women unable to attend these, we also offer some weekends in the city, on Friday nights and Saturdays.

Lesbian Culture *June 10-12 At the farm $45*

How do we begin to study the lives and works of women who define themselves as lesbians? Using a model that starts with self and radiates out in concentric circles through time, we will construct at least the process of becoming/remaining lesbians. We will consider such questions as: what patterns of shared experience/perception emerge? which of society's myths about lesbians have affected my own life? what are our own myths? how/why should we go about designing rituals for lesbians? what aspects of lesbian women's culture are similar to non-lesbian women's culture? what is the relationship between questions like these and questions raised by the feminist movement? This workshop is open to any woman, regardless of her self-definition.

Sherrill Hooker: "I'm a lesbian feminist therapist. I believe that it is important for us as lesbians to acknowledge our culture as a way of gaining strength and validation in an oppressive society."

Toni McNaron: "As an educator, I am especially concerned that we begin to teach and learn about lesbian history and culture. Without such information, lesbians remain ignorant of our past and the rest of society continues to be sceptical and fearful of our lives and works."

Motherbond and Motherlove: Are they the same? *June 17-19 At the farm $45*

Much of who we are is created in the bond between ourselves and our mothers. In recasting the experience of our mothers, we discover a love, mutuality and pattern of inter-reliance shaping our lives. In reclaiming this experience, we come to understand not only our mothers and ourselves as mothers and daughters, but our mothers and ourselves as women among women. This will be an experiential weekend, with the sharing of readings, pictures and personal stories as our means of exploration. Bring along your mother or daughter in person or in spirit.

Barbara Lightner: a student of literature, farmer, student of law, and a mother.

Connie Wolfe: an experiential therapist interested in mothers and daughters, and a mother.

Reconsidering

July 8-10 At the farm $45

A special weekend for women who were in the women's movement in 1972 or before. Where are you now? Where have you been? Is the personal political? Is sisterhood powerful? Are men the enemy? Are women an oppressed caste? How has the women's movement changed you? How has the women's movement changed? What gains have you realized from involvement in the women's movement? Where do we go from here? We will discuss our original expectations of the women's movement, the early feminist truths, strategies we've tried—what's worked and what's failed, maintaining commitment to the movement in the face of burnout, sabotage from within, from the FBI, and what keeps us working in the women's movement (or from working in the movement).

Cheri Register: a vintage 1968 feminist who spends a lot of time worrying about what directions feminism ought to take. She was involved in the Twin Cities Female Liberation Group, is a co-founder of the Emma Willard Task Force on Education, and is now teaching in the Women's Studies Program at the University of Minnesota. She has just finished a book comparing women's movements and women's literature in the US and Sweden.

Gerri Perreault: Co-founder of the Emma Willard Task Force on Education. Now doing graduate work in higher education at the University of Minnesota and specializing in aoult development and learning. She is also a community faculty member at Metropolitan State University.

Women's Wilderness Retreat

July 21-24 In northern Minnesota $55

A four-day canoe trip in northern Minnesota. Women without experience will have the opportunity to develop camping skills, but the emphasis will be on our internal rather than external experience. What are our attitudes toward the wilderness? To what extent are we influenced by the male idea of "conquering" nature? Do we feel competitive or ego-involved about our skills? What fears have we learned about survival in the woods? How do we experience ourselves, our spirituality, differently away from "civilization"?

Jean Eckerly: "I have always loved the wilderness, and want to share the experience of being part of it."

Judy Niemi: "As a student/teacher of literature I read a lot about our culture's attitudes toward wilderness; as a free-lance person I like sharing my love of the woods with other women."

Preserving Food

August 26-28 At the farm $25

An on-the-farm experience in organic methods of canning, juicing, freezing and drying vegetables, fruits and heros. Help us take in our garden and enjoy learning everything you need to know about putting food up.

Rosie Morin: Gardener, apple picker, canner. "Canning and preserving food in large quantities, for example, gallons of apple sauce, has long been my forte. Canning is not complex or difficult, there are just a few basic things to know."

Linda Stipe: Sky Lover-Earth Digger, Green Handed-Food Grower. "Bottling sunshine for winter. This is a good time of hard work, music, and the fun of each other."

Lesbianism and Sexuality

September 9-11 At the farm $45

Like all other women, and more than most women, lesbians are needing to redefine and rediscover their sexuality, which has been hidden and misrepresented in the dominant culture. This workshop will examine the language which has pretended to describe women's sexuality, share our experiences in separating our own reality from the myths about us, and discuss alternative patterns for relationships and the place of sexuality in lesbian culture.

Sherrill Hooker: "As a lesbian feminist therapist, I want to explore, among other things, how societal pressure has affected our sexuality, and how wonderfully we have survived that pressure."

Jean Eckerly: "As a physician, I am interested in how our position in a heterosexual society affects our bodies, e.g. cancer, menstrual discomfort, psychophysiologic illnesses, attitudes toward menopause."

Women Relate to the Environment, or are we all earth goddesses?

September 16-17 At the farm $25

Beginning Friday evening, we will explore some myths about women and our relationship to the land and surrounding environment. While exploring mythology, we will talk about our own feelings about the land. We will also discuss our feelings about dominant culture's definition of women as related to the land. On Saturday, we will create our own environment from materials on the farm, and then create our own ritual inspired by the environment and our feelings. This will be a time for women to be together at the farm, to redefine our connection with nature.

Cynthia Ann LaCoeur: "I am interested in reestablishing women's connection with the earth. My research in mythology and my feelings about the land have served as tools for me to explore this connection. Combining these tools with other women's feelings and stories about the environment is very exciting for me."

Reading, Writing and Arithmetic of Musical Theory

June 9, 16, 23, 30, July 7, 14 (7:30-10pm) $30
In Minneapolis

This series will concern itself with: sight-singing from written music; dictation (writing down music from piano and voice); training and concepts of scales and keys (usage and comfort with); technical and experimental use of 2- and 4-part harmony; melody writing and instrumental accompaniment.

Mardi Steinau: A long-term student of music whose desire is to explain and explore music as an historic body of knowledge and as finite conceptual, mathematical and physical skills. These are matters over which a shroud has been placed to keep technical expertise from women, or in some cases held as mysterious and male. Those with no musical knowledge whatsoever or with substantial proficiency should know that the range between those two points will be stressed more than either extreme. Aspiring composers, group singers, intermediate instrumentalists and any women desiring to make music clearer and more portable for themselves (as in changing its form from sung or played to written, or the reverse) will probably find special solace here.

Thanks to Elaine and Alice, who donated an answering machine, you can call Maiden Rock anytime at our number (612) 822-2241, and either speak to one of us or leave a message.